

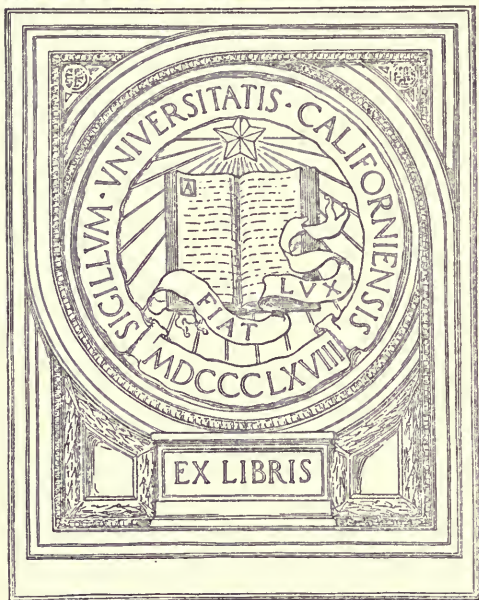
THE CIRCLE OF A CENTURY



MRS. BURTON HARRISON

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UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA
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THE GIFT OF
MAY TREAT MORRISON
IN MEMORY OF
ALEXANDER F MORRISON

Books by
Mrs. Burton Harrison.



THE CIRCLE OF A CENTURY.
AN ERRANT WOOING.
A BACHELOR MAID.
SWEET BELLS OUT OF TUNE.
CROW'S NEST AND BELHAVEN TALES.
GOOD AMERICANS.
THE ANGLOMANIACS.
A DAUGHTER OF THE SOUTH.
FLOWER DE HUNDRED.
THE MERRY MAID OF ARCADY.
A VIRGINIA COUSIN AND BAR HARBOR
TALES.
A SON OF THE OLD DOMINION.

THE
CIRCLE OF A CENTURY

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BY

MRS. BURTON HARRISON



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1899

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PART I
IN OLD NEW YORK



THE CIRCLE OF A CENTURY

PART I IN OLD NEW YORK

I



AFTER 1787, when the new order of things national began to assert itself in New York, the little city, worn by armies of occupation and ravaged by the many fires during the Revolution, took on a new lease of life.

The hearts of her faithful dwellers beat high with the sense of returning prosperity. Their old houses were made to blush in coats of ruddy paint, their gardens were restocked with shrubs and flowers, their rooms refitted with foreign furniture and ornaments. Everywhere substantial homes and tenements sprang up like Aladdin's palace. The brick sidewalks, that until recently had extended northward no higher than St. Paul's Chapel in Broadway, were repaired and pushed farther, although they could not, alas! recall the vanished glory of leafage that had arched over them before so many of the shade-trees of these streets

were cut down for fuel by beleaguered residents while the war lasted.

The thoroughfares were cleaned and better lighted; trade flourished; markets and warehouses, late lean as Shylock's purse, knew again the sensation of fullness to satiety. Every ship from the old countries that braved the boisterous Atlantic in search of Manhattan's shores arrived laden with dainties and novelties for her shops.

New York may have been more picturesque, more stately, more literally aristocratic in her days of Dutch or English domination, but never so interesting as when the new wine of Americanism was thrilling in her veins. She at once took the lead, ever since maintained, as the most cosmopolitan city of the republic.

But although willing in some degree to accept the doctrines of republican simplicity since called Jeffersonian, New-Yorkers had no idea of parting with all the habits and customs acquired from their sponsors in an older civilization. Among the upper classes personal luxury was the rule. Ladies and gentlemen walked in silk attire, wore powdered periwigs, jeweled buttons, and ruffles of cobweb lace, drank rare wines, and kept a host of negro or mulatto servants. When some gentry took the air, it was in chariots with lacquered panels, painted cream and gold, each drawn by four shining horses, and presided over by coachmen such as nowadays are seen only at some great function of a European court or upon the stage in a fairy pantomime. One trembles at what the "society columns" would have to say in derision of the leading

New-Yorker who might venture in these times to go abroad in his great-grandfather's eustomary state !

Ah, well ! There is hardly a panel or a hammer-cloth left of those brilliant old-time vehicles, and the jeweled buttons of their great-grandfathers' coats serve Maud and Mabel of to-day to deck their gowns at fancy balls. Our leading citizens allow themselves to be jammed past recognition in overcrowded cars of the elevated railway, or hang upon the straps of agitating trolleys. But it is pleasant to remember that these outward and visible signs of the age of Beau Brocade once flaunted in the dull lower streets of our island city ; and to write of them brings back a whole pageant of high-stepping thoughts and courtly fancies.

The high-water mark of this renaissance of Gotham's fashionable display was reached when General Washington came from Mount Vernon to accept the supreme trust of the infant nation in the balcony of Federal Hall. That month of May, 1789, after the President had taken up his residence in the Franklin House in Cherry Street, was a dizzy round of routs, balls, dinners, tea-drinkings, and card-parties. No wonder New England held her breath in amazement at what she called the "vortex of folly and dissipation" in the giddy metropolis of New York.

The echoes of the inauguration ball in the Assembly Rooms, where the Boreel Building stands in modern Broadway, had not yet died away, but were augmented by those of the fête given the week following by M. de Moustier, the diplomatic representative of France, who, in common parlance, was called the French "Ambassador."

When two women put their heads together to talk about "the General" leading out that lucky Mrs. Maxwell for the minuet, and one asked the other if she had secured one of those lovely fans distributed at the Assembly Rooms, somebody was sure to interrupt with the enchanting decorations of De Moustier's house, and the buffet supper there.

Enough could not be said of the clever surprise and inventions planned for her brother's guests by the ambassador's artistic sister, Madame la Marquise de Bréhan. Where did such an odd, whimsical old lady get her wonderful sense of color?

These matters were under discussion one afternoon in the drawing-room of a large house situated near the lower end of "the Broadway," past which, customarily, streamed and flaunted the fashionable world of promenaders. Built of glazed brick, its roof surmounted by a platform with balustrades meant for taking the air of a summer evening, and the front door by a plaque with armorial bearings, this dwelling was the most important one in the vicinity, and in the highest condition of good repair. Its windows opened at the rear upon a garden terraced to the river, from which now floated in a refreshing odor of salt water tinged with a scent of wallflowers and hyacinths in bloom. By peeping through the shutters of the drawing-room, bowed on the street side, one had a capital view of the thoroughfare.

During the recent months of her widowhood—of course, not at first—Mistress Lucilla Warriner had established outside another of the windows, at which she was wont to sit with her tambour-frame, a small

circular mirror. In this she could see, without being likely to be seen, people ascending her broad steps to pull the jangling bell behind which black Pompey sat and napped, in waiting to admit or refuse visitors.

To-day Pompey had received no instructions exclusive or prohibitory. Mrs. Warriner's drawing-room was full of people. The cream of governmental, professional, and higher mercantile circles mingled there with the gentry of independent means content simply to adorn society. Around the fair hostess gathered, as usual, an admiring coterie. It was a subject of congratulation to them all that her "second mourning" was now, at last, merged into visible lavender, and that she had appeared at two balls in a week.

"And how many more are to come? It's positively killing," declared Mistress Lucilla.

The widow did not look as if she had any idea of paying nature's last debt. Her chestnut hair, worn in a high *tour*, and surmounted by a coquettish wisp of Mechlin lace,—to match that on her pinner, sleeve-ruffles, and muslin apron,—was shot with sunny gleams. Her lips and cheeks were living roses. Her eyes of warm hazel could as easily dance with mischief as cloud with sympathy. And her complexion of fine translucent texture! Only Mrs. Jay's and Queen Marie Antoinette's of France could equal it in brilliancy of tint!

Nine years before, when a girl of seventeen, coming of a good family in Albany, Miss Lucilla Chester had been wedded by her ambitious parents to Octavius Warriner, Esquire, lord of a great manor on the

Hudson, owner of one of the finest houses in New York, and descendant of a line of feudal rulers in the colony. The young lady had been seen by him first when a school-girl at a ball for the Continental officers of Morristown, in New Jersey, and the close of the war had witnessed the accomplishment of their nuptials.

Just what those years of dazzling fortune had really meant to Lucilla none knew save her confidential servants, and perhaps her husband's cousin, Captain Arnold Warriner, late of the Continental Army. Lucilla's father had died; and the journey from Albany to the Manor-house was said to be too formidable to be often taken by Mrs. Warriner's mama, who, however, knew the real reason why she so rarely visited her son-in-law.

The outer world, impressed by the pomp of Octavius's appearances in public and his benefactions to State and charity, could not be supposed to guess that his wife and her vast household of servants had actually lived like mice on cheese-parings; or that her elderly husband had held in check every impulse of Lucilla's girlish spirit, weighed and measured every item of her personal expenditure, treated her with cold formality, and, in sum, withheld from her young life all save the bare necessities of existence. Nothing but the immortal elasticity of youth had kept her from asphyxiating of ennui.

And when he died he had left her everything. His will, extolling her virtues with the turgid grace of a tombstone, placed in her inexperienced hands control, so long as she should survive, of one of the largest

fortunes in the State. She was now, at six-and-twenty, like a nun emerged from a cloister to rule over a principality!

Octavius Warriner's demise had occurred at the Manor-house nearly two years before our story begins. Arnold,—who had been always kept at a formal distance from this household,—together with a few remoter relatives, saw to it that the chief of their family was consigned to his last rest in a style befitting his high place in the community. Madam Chester came from Albany to take up permanent abode in a mansion of which she had been long itching to advise the management. The funeral was imposing. A pipe of spiced wine, with rivers of beer and cider, were dispensed to its attendants, while the gloves, hatbands, scarfs, mourning-rings, and monkey-spoons conferred on the pall-bearers and the executors of the will were the costliest money could buy. The lord of the Manor was followed to his ancestral tomb in the Hudson wilderness by a long train of kinsmen, tenants, servants, and dependents, leaving his wife clinging to her mother in the great empty house at home. But not crying. Lucilla was too dazed for that!

As months passed, and her nature had rebounded, Lucilla had been shocked by experiencing a glad, mad sense of joy. In the first year of widowhood she had elected to spend most of her time at their country-seat, of which the surrounding groves and brawling streams and mighty, placid river were alleged by her mother to exercise a soothing influence on her sort of grief.

Often and again would she escape from the sitting-room, done in prim sunflower-yellow damask and scented with strange foreign odors, wherein Madam Chester sat before a fire of hickory logs, knitting in hand, a smile of satisfied ambition wreathing her handsome lips at thought that no male creature with obstinate ideas stood now between Lucilla's and her own enjoyment of luxurious life! Lucilla had listened, until endurance ceased to be a virtue, to old saws, placid self-gratulations that Madam Chester had been enabled by Providence to furnish poor Mr. Warriner with such a devoted helpmeet, and agreeable forecasts of a wider material outlook when their days of mourning should be past. She often longed for indulgence in her own thoughts, for a fresher air, for a tramp in the wintry woods, guarded only by her hound. Sometimes, when snow lay glistening on the Highlands opposite, she would go down the steep hillside to the ice-bound river, and, attended at a distance by two negro footmen, skate for miles, coming back reluctantly to where the blue curls of smoke rose from her chimneys on the eminence above.

Far as her eye could reach on either hand it was all her own domain. He had left it to her without restriction for her lifetime; the use of it all, and all the income, were hers; though at her death the lands, and whatever should then be left of the principal of the personalty, were to go to Arnold Warriner. The whole great estate with its gardens, lawns, fruit-orchards, and deer parks, the mansion with its appendage of forty black slaves to do her bidding, and the town house, not to speak of the long rent-rolls and fat hoardings

of her late penurious spouse! Lucilla was a princess in fortune and surroundings.

But are not all princesses at times a little dull? The young widow whom fate had so richly dowered was the kind of woman whose ambitions are bounded by the hearth-rug, provided Love sits on the other side. She had never known a hearth-rug with this embellishment. But in her heart she longed for happy young companionship, for sympathy, fun, contact with other people's lives, and—low be it whispered!—two things in special: a real lover, and a pale-blue satin paduasoy! Blue was her color—no doubt about that; but she had never owned a satin, rich, thick, lustrous, that would make an imposing “cheese” when she courtesied in company. And the petticoat to go with it should be of blue-and-silver stuff, the stockings silk with silver clocks, the feathers blue marabou with silver fringe! With a guilty start, Lucilla often found herself wondering when the law of etiquette would allow her to realize this dream.

Since our grown-up child was not in China, where custom prescribes the celestial colors to those bereaved, the last-named longing had not yet been satisfied. Even at the De Moustier ball the night before she had worn puce, with black bows, because mama said poor Mr. Warriner would be pleased with it if he were looking down. To-day, in the privacy of her own home, she had gone so far as to add a few knots of pale violet-tinted ribbon to her cap and handkerchief and to the pockets of her apron. Clearly, the blue satin was in sight!

But the lover! Where was he?

"I protest," went on Mistress Lucilla to her bevy of listeners, "the court quadrilles last night were the prettiest ever seen. I could not make up my mind whether to avow myself for the red rose of France or the bluebell of Columbia, and so would not dance in them at all."

"But you danced three times afterward with a gentleman in red regimentals, my dear angel!" exclaimed her friend, Miss Betsy Crewe. "Now, I would not for the world have appeared on the French side in the quadrilles, even though the master of ceremonies and the Marquise herself teased me to wear the rosy scarf. Well content was I to take my steps in Columbia's ranks, with such a partner as I had in the blue and buff! But I might have spared my pains, for my captain did nothing but look over toward the benches where a certain puce gown with black' bows was sitting, trying to look *so* demure, *so* old-ladified, with all the dowagers! My liveliest sallies produced from him nothing but glum answers and melancholy smiles; and when the sets were over, amid all the applause we received, he asked me only if I thought his Cousin Warriner had gone out to her chair. Really, Lu, you treat him shockingly. I never saw a youth so far gone in the tender passion. And so handsome he is, too—quite the beauty among our beaux!"

"My vote would be for his friend and rival in good looks, Captain Laurence Hope," cried Miss Polly Clinton.

At this point their hostess, who had been serving chocolate in her pretty flowered cups, was so unfor-

fortunate as to drop the cover of the china pot containing that fragrant beverage upon the rim of the sugar-dish, breaking it to bits. And hearing the crash, Madam Chester, who was pouring out tea at another table, hurried across the room and chided her daughter smartly.

"That Dresden set, child, that poor, dear Mr. Warriner had brought out on the *Lovely Kate*, and thought so much of that he kept it under lock and key! I'm surprised at your heedlessness! One would think you 'd forgotten your husband's feelings."

"Here come the two captains now," interposed Miss Crewe, properly ignoring the lesson in domestic ethics she overheard. "Adonises in philopena, I call them!"

The heavy door of carved mahogany swinging inward revealed Pompey, in his coat of half-mourning livery, strutting ahead of two young gentlemen. "Vastly pretty fellows" they were sometimes styled, in the phrase of that day; but we may see at a glance the inappropriateness of the term as applied to this vigorous and manly couple, who, having both entered the service of the Continental Army as lads, had gone through the war with credit and were now returned to New York.

Arnold Warriner, the more regularly handsome of the two, was first to greet the lady behind the chocolate-pot, a ceremony performed with the easy and confident grace of one who feels his feet to be upon firm ground.

During the last three months he had fulfilled the prophecy of the gossips at the outset of Lucilla's widowhood, and had come forward gallantly and

devotedly as the avowed suitor of his late kinsman's fair relict.

"'T would be a thousand pities," quoth the voice of society, "for these two young people, so obviously intended for each other, to delay much longer in announcing their engagement." True, it averred, Mistress Lucilla, with her long purse and charming beauty, might aspire with reason to any match—nay, even to the most illustrious alliance with foreign rank ever made in our country! And Captain Warriner might yet find that, whilst he was philandering, some visiting grandee had swooped down and carried off the prize.

The captain was known for a sad dawdler in love matters, and elsewhere was suspected of being a black sheep. Until the present time no one could have counted upon him to remain faithful to one fair. But now, some people said, he could not afford to wander. He had lately lost much at cards; his horse, Ajax, that had been heavily backed by him to run from the Palisade Gate, at Wall Street and Broadway, out to Kingsbridge and back, in an hour and forty minutes, had failed by five minutes; and he was out of pocket in many other ways. What a shame for such a good-looking Warriner to be needing money, when there was his cousin's great property, to which he had blood right, and Mistress Lucilla none!

If he did not get her, no doubt she would soon marry some one else, have a houseful of children, live to a green old age, and spend her first husband's money upon a brood of a different name and race.

Poetic justice and the suffrages of the fair being

thus all on the side of Captain Arnold, it becomes us to inquire what were his own feelings in this important matter. Outwardly his homage was laid without reserve at his pretty cousin's feet. No other woman had the ghost of a show when Lucilla was in the room. He looked at her, languished from afar, or was on hand to render her service as assiduously as a confessed Strephon should have done. Lookers-on applauded his frank surrender to Lucilla's charms.

Truth to tell, the captain applauded himself. Since he had resolved to go into this thing, he thought he had done it thoroughly. What did he really care for the rivalry of the other suitors, who, in three months, had sprung up like weeds in the widow's pathway? Neither masqueraders on the French side in red regimentals, nor his fellow-revelers in blue and buff, had afflicted him with fear. He could not bring himself to feel apprehensions of the distinguished member of the new Congress, or yet of the head of the most solid mereantile business in town, of the widowed physician, or of the old bachelor lawyer, all of whom had entered the lists beside him. If it pleased Lucilla to fancy her fish tortured upon her hook, he was willing to let her play him, too.

Least of all did Arnold fear that most outspoken opponent of his claims, Madam Chester. He was shrewd enough to see that the lady would use her influence to keep at bay all pretenders to her daughter's hand. Never since her own marriage-day, twenty-seven years before, had Madam Chester enjoyed so long a space of freedom from contradiction by a man. During Lucilla's marriage she had been

kept in indignant resentment of her daughter's husband's claims. Was it likely that in the dawn of this day of better things the good lady would wish to lay her scepter down? Besides,—so said Captain Warriner irreverently,—the old bird knew that her nest was well lined with the down of Lucilla's fortune, and would not be likely to step out of it without a conflict. Let her address to him all the sarcastic speeches in her repertory, he did not mind. One word, one downcast look, one heavenly blush of Lucilla's, would give him his revenge!

He was really growing quite enamoured of this cousin, who in her married life had seemed to him a silent, shrinking girl, without initiative, and with only a good figure and skin to recommend her. Suddenly she had burst into a rose of beauty! As much as Captain Arnold could admire anything besides himself, he admired his prospective wife. By and by, when he should feel quite ready to renounce celibate joys, he would propose to her in form. Till then, let Lucilla fancy him her humble captive. In matters like this a man has sometimes to stoop to conquer.

To-day, after saluting with reverence her white hand, he drew back and allowed Captain Laurence Hope to take his place. Now, there would have been no law in the social calendar broken by Captain Hope in following the example of his late brother in arms and bending to kiss the lily of Lucilla's hand in greeting. But he did not do so, remaining stiffly erect until the widow, whose face had been half averted at his approach, turned upon him the full gaze of her eyes.

"You are later than you promised!" she said, softly reproachful.

"I have been in attendance upon the President in the fourteen-mile ride," was the answer. "And the mud left on us by the chief's pace, when we were well out of sight of men, necessitated a prolonged toilet on my return. Jove! he is a wonder in the saddle!"

"As in all departments of life," replied Mrs. War-riner, primly. She wished not to lose these moments of tête-à-tête in discussing the General, and began to fear lest some one else should come in and claim her attention. It was so hard to see any one alone! This pomp and homage that surrounded her cut her off from many little privileges dear to her sex. And then, Captain Hope was always, in a way, inscrutable. One minute she was convinced that she, and she alone, possessed his heart; the next she feared, nay, was assured of, his complete indifference.

At that moment some story-teller on the other side of the room began retailing a delicious bit of gossip. So nice was the stomach of the French Ambassador, 't was said, and so contemptuous his sister, the Mar-quis, of the American cuisine, that when invited to dinner, even with the heads of government, 't was the custom of his Excellency to sit without eating, crumpling bread upon the cloth, till the moment for the service of the *relevé*. Then in would march the Ambassador's chef, in snowy cap and apron, a damask napkin on his arm, carrying a mighty pie of truffled game of his own making. The dainty was placed before his master, who, after serving it to his neighbors, ate of it and of no other dish!

This anecdote, followed by others as savory concerning the eccentricities of the Marquise, had the effect of diverting to the fortunate speaker the whole attention of the room. M. Brissot de Warville, the cheery little traveler and teller of strange tales, coming in soon after, was quite east into the shade.

Lucilla only, and Hope—who said little and was more than ever a victim of reserve—remained by the table supporting Mr. Warriner's now totally unheeded Dresden chocolate set. When the widow found that they were not to be interrupted for this little precious time, she could not restrain the almost pleading note that crept into her tones :

"You did not see fit to join me in the promenade yesterday, after all ! And when I found that a certain gentleman had not pressed to claim my hand for the Columbian side of the quadrilles, I went over in a secret pet, and took my place among the ancients, where I suppose he thinks I fain should be."

"Where, by heaven, your beauty shone forth with redoubled splendor," cried he, irrepressibly. "Ah, madam, what have I done that you should add this to my burden of self-denial ? I believe you know full well that during the quadrilles I sulked in the card-room, as savage in my solitude as an Indian chief."

"I, too, was sulky," said she, pouting, but with an inward glow. His impassioned speech had transformed his whole face and manner. Never had she found him so noble, so beautiful. But now that she had won him to give her this much, she must at once restrain him from giving more.

"I felt cross because of my gown. Although sober in hue, it was half covered with lace no woman in town can match; and an officer, whose name I won't tell you, since he has threatened to commit suicide for his awkwardness, had just allowed his sword-hilt to make a fearful rent in the left side of my tunic. Now, picture my predicament! To mend this properly I must, perhaps, send to Brussels, where 't was made, and go without wearing it for horrid ages. Though that reminds me, Captain Hope. No longer ago than last week a friend told us that your mother knows of a Scotch-Irish person—a protégée of hers—the most skilled mender of laces in the town. Perhaps you might help me to the services of this Miss—what did they call her? Miss Eve Watson—was it not?"

Now, indeed, had Mrs. Warriner opportunity to observe an excellent display of Captain Hope's before-mentioned peculiarity of changing mood with startling suddenness. He became stiff as a ramrod, grew red, then pale, then fixed upon her a piercing look as if seeking to read her thoughts.

"Whatever can you mean?" she cried, with a perfectly natural surprise. "I ask you the simplest favor, and one would think I had committed a capital offense. Be sure, captain, that after this I shall trespass no more on your good nature."

"Then you had no ulterior motive? Nobody has been—you are quite unaware? Oh, no! I see it; you are as innocent as a child, and I am an ill-mannered, touchy brute, who deserves to be crossed off your list of acquaintances. Mrs. Warriner, although you have known me three months, it has always been under the

eyes of strangers and outsiders. Not so much as a stroll with you have I had without some idiot of a man or gossip of a woman coming up and interrupting us. For many a whole sleepless night I have plotted to gain speech with you alone, and been foiled when the time came. If you could know me as I am—if somewhere in this overcrowded world there were allotted to us two a spot secluded from observation—”

Lucilla, in the not unhappy confusion of her feelings, cast a thought to the lonely acres of Warriner Manor, wondering if she would find them quite the same in the company of this handsome, petulant fellow, who had again checked himself, and was biting his lip in vexation at having said so much!

Then into her mind sped a little, tempting winged thought. In the garden at the rear, where spring flowers were a-blow and trees leaned their leafy branches toward the river's brink, there was a bench where she often sat alone.

“If to-morrow is fine, and you care to come through the wicket of my garden toward five o'clock,” she said, blushing deeply, “I think I can show you a bed of tulips that would do credit to any *goede vrow* of earlier days.”

What Hope would have answered, Lucilla could but surmise. While a new arrival claimed her, again the too-frequent cloud came upon his brow, and he drew back, then waited until he could say in a low whisper:

“Be it so, then. I shall be there, though I have no right to give myself such happiness.”

"And you won't forget the lace-mender?" replied Lucilla, joyous that she had conquered, and hardly knowing what she said.

For answer he hurried from the room.

And now Lucilla was again surrounded.

"I can't divine what ails Captain Hope," said Miss Polly Clinton, who had seen something of what had passed. "I'll vow he's completely changed, this month past. So fickle in his moods, and so prone to get into gloomy spells!"

"They say," put in an acidulated widow of forty, who had not yet succeeded in replacing her lost treasure of a spouse, "that since their reverse of fortune his mother never ceases to urge on him the necessity to marry money. And what with this pressure at home, and his poor father a paralytic in his chair, and the Hopes knowing themselves by-gones, it can't be supposed that Laurence can take a cheerful view of life. Besides, what old New-Yorker does n't know that on his mother's side of the family there is derangement? His great-aunt Prissy used to fancy herself the wife of the man in the moon. Dear knows 't would be a risk for any sane woman to take up with Captain Hope, be she young or getting on in life."

And with this last not barbless shaft Mistress Malice took her flight. Mrs. Warriner took this painful weapon to bed with her that night, turned it in the wound, and cried over the smart. At one moment she was resolved to play him false by failing to be in the garden at the appointed time. At the next she smiled with sweet triumph and confident be-

lief that he loved her for her own loving self alone ! But how very abrupt and odd he had been about doing her the simple favor she had asked ! What could there be about a mere lace-mender to come between her and the monarch of her heart ?

II



THE dwelling in Queen Street toward which Captain Hope directed his steps after leaving the widow Warriner's tea-table was already beginning to take rank in the town as a relic of antiquity, the one marking the earliest pretension of New York to luxurious living.

Built in 1695 by his father's grandfather, its bold façade, and generous dimensions of sixty by eighty feet, together with the carvings and decorations of the exterior, and the great empty stables and coach-house in the rear, excited much reverence from lookers-on.

What of the inside failed to be revealed in the airings and cleanings Madam Hope's black women from time to time bestowed on it was invented by lively imagination, and handed down to swell tradition's blast.

People loved to talk of the old French nutwood furniture, the velvet cushions trimmed with gold lace, the mirrors and pictures of the rooms of state on the first floor. They said less of the smaller apartments up-stairs, kept warm and cozy for the two invalids who were all that was left to represent the proud line of founders of the house.

For the predecessors of Laurence Hope had figured conspicuously, and at times brilliantly, in the political and military affairs of the province. Their name was writ high in history; and the fact that, through one accident of fortune after another, the present representatives of the family were near the bottom of the ladder did not cause their fellow-citizens to regard the Hopes as of less social consequence than before.

But these circumstances, however soothing to pride, failed in making Laurence Hope's home a pleasant resort for a man in the vigor of his youth. He well knew what he would find there: his father, helpless and almost childish in his chair, eager to ask questions, forgetful before the answers came, still more eager about the little dishes and dainty menus the women-folk managed to provide for him; his mother, whose courage and ceaseless effort to hold up the falling pillars of their house had failed, with her health, a few years back, upon the death of her elder son, who, though a rake and a gambler, was yet the darling of her heart! She was now a creature of whims and exactions, whose bursts of temper were succeeded by hours of frozen silence.

And Eve—there was always Eve!

Eve was twenty, now. She had been "taken up" by Madam Hope, then in full possession of her rare gift of management, when but a waxen-faced girl of sixteen with a mop of thick red hair, the child of a Scotch-Irish mechanic, who had brought her, an infant in arms, across the sea to try his luck in the New World. Job Watson had prospered at his trade of carpentry, but, losing his wife, had been glad to secure

a home for Eve in the house of gentlefolk, where she could be trained for domestic service.

In the beginning Madam Hope had found out the girl's talent for finest needlework. Were there a moth-hole in some web of Indian loom, a "snag" in priceless lace, or worn place in rich old table-damask, Eve's twinkling fingers could make it as good as new. From keeping her mistress's wardrobe and table-linen in repair she had passed on to be amanuensis, secretary, sick-nurse, companion, accountant, and at last manager and mainstay of the household. Under her rule, comfort was now maintained where otherwise there would have been a barren waste. And during the period of her development to high womanly usefulness, and while reflecting the refinement of her surroundings, a common miracle of nature was accomplished. Eve had grown beautiful!

Many eyes and tongues had made note of this fact before. When the girl was just turned nineteen Captain Laurence was ordered to New York. One can imagine the effect upon young Hope's imagination of this sweet and helpful vision in his stricken home. Modest and self-effacing, Eve never pushed herself upon the interviews he held daily with his parents; but as to her they looked for services he could not render, he had been for months seeing her continually, and had owed her the most substantial consolations of his difficult position. It was Eve who made smooth the rough places inevitable in their intercourse. It was Eve who had been his friend-confidante—and latterly something nearer.

Spite of this magnet, Hope did not now seem to

hasten to reach his home. He made a detour, walking far and hard before going back to the neighborhood of the paternal mansion. When he again turned into their street the afternoon was closing into evening, and the tall house, looming up against a daffodil sky, seemed to him steeped in shadows.

Above the portal at the front was a massive balcony from which bygone governors of the province had been wont to review troops. Looking up at it through recent habit, Hope saw fly out toward him a fluttering square of white.

At once Laurence turned and retraced his steps. When at a point secure against observation from the house he waited. His lips were drawn, his forehead knotted. Whoever was coming to be his comrade, no buoyancy of welcome was in the mien of Laurence Hope.

Almost immediately he was joined by a girl in a gown of oft-washed dimity, carrying in her hand a traveling-bag, and wearing a veil of green gauze drawn closely over the front of her straw scoop-bonnet.

"So you are for the water, after all?" he said, with attempted lightness. "Had I known you could relent in my favor I'd have come home earlier. Last night, when I dropped in to show the old people my regimentals for the ball, you were adamant about going out alone with me, unknown to them. What, Eve—crying! Take my arm, dear, and let us walk on. Then you can tell me what has troubled you."

"Laurie, the most dreadful thing has happened! She found that note you wrote asking me to go out

for a row with you to-day. You know how you signed it. It is all over; she has ordered me from the house."

"Eve!"

"Yes. Don't speak till I tell you, for I've no time to lose. I'd have walked the three miles to father's farm but that I waited to speak to you. And now it's too late for me to walk alone, and—and I have no money for a chaise."

Her voice, broken by weeping, failed her.

"Eve, my mother must be mad if she sent you away penniless."

"She does not know that I am so. There are reasons I can't explain why it is thus. But that is nothing beside the way she spoke. Laurie, she can be terrible when you are in question. She was like a tigress robbed of her young."

"Come back, then, and let me tell her that I will brook no such interference in my affairs!" exclaimed the young man, fiercely. "We shall see whether or not I have the right to choose a wife for myself."

"Oh, no, no! She has shown me too plainly the insolence of such pretension on my part. The madness was mine, even to listen to you, to dream that I could be accepted by your family. Laurie, it would have been a thousand times better had we been firm at first, and not let ourselves drift into this thing, that can bring us nothing but misery. Wherever I look ahead there is no hope for us. My father—"

"That rigid old Bluelight ought to have served with the Covenanters, and by hacking and hewing worked out his objections to my class. Is it only

because I am what I am, Eve, that you think he would refuse you to me? Or is there another reason?"

"He has always warned me against you' since the first time you came home, and I think he honestly believes that a man who plays cards and goes to the playhouse is on the highroad to perdition. But I must tell you the truth, Laurie. He has set his heart on my marrying a young man, a fellow-workman of his; and because I won't hear of Luke Adamson for a suitor he has been very violent. My last visit home was such as I try not to think about. And when he knows I have promised to marry you—"

"There 'll be the deuce to pay, then, at your house, as well as mine. Eve, little girl, we are n't the first couple that failed to count the cost of falling in love. But I 'll stand by you, and never fear but we 'll pull out of this trouble. How far you were excusable for your share in the matter it does n't become me to say. But are n't you the only bright spot of my home?"

"Don't remind me of that; after all, I owe the best of my life to your dear mother! For I do love her, Laurie, in spite of her cruelty to-day. She was not herself. She has had many sore trials, and it should n't have been I who added to them. What can they do without me? Who will there be to take my place this evening? He 'll never sleep without my reading aloud; and she calls me always, the last thing before she drops off, to lay my hand upon her forehead and soothe her nerves. It was my fault. I presumed too far and forgot my station, and now my poor benefactors will never ask me to come back.

Oh, Laurie, Laurie, already my sin has found me out ! Help me to get home and brave my father's anger ; and do you go back and tell them that I swear never to think of you again, except as the child of my dearest, truest friends."

The glad bounding of Laurence Hope's heart almost took away his powers of speech. What he would have answered was restrained by the burst of grief that now overwhelmed his young companion, shaking her slender form until he was forced to put his arm around her for support.

Although the streets were nearly deserted—save by the muffin-man, and the carts carrying water from the tea-house pump—he feared to attract the notice of passers-by, and looked about him for some place of refuge.

By good fortune they were just then passing the thread-and-needle and comfit shop of Mrs. Pips, one of his mother's beneficiaries, a lone woman whom he had known over her little counter from the days of his earliest purchases. By looking through the glass of the closed door he could see that the tiny place was empty of customers, and leading Eve within, he explained to the proprietor that she had been suddenly taken faint upon the street—adding that he was off to secure a chaise in which to take her home.

"Dear heart, and that 's little enough to ask for Eve Watson, who brings me all the custom o' your house, captain," exclaimed the dame ; "let alone what Madam Hope did when my poor Pips lay a-dyin' in that very room behind the shop, where I'll take the girl and let her sit in quiet."

As Hope hastened away, a sense of relief arising amid his perplexity, he did not observe that two young bucks of fashion strolling on the opposite sidewalk had stopped to take notice of the little episode.

"Oh, ho! Sits the wind in that quarter, Master Laurie?" said Arnold Warriner, executing a low whistle of surprise. "I wonder who's the Dulcinea?"

"Why, man, where have you been, never to have seen Eve Watson, Madam Hope's tirewoman or companion, who is reputed to be one of the most delicious beauties of the town, though so stiff-necked and uppish no one can get her to turn her head in passing?"

"So that 's she, is it?" replied Arnold. "I saw her but once, at the play, under Madam Hope's wing, and got no encouragement when I waited to ogle her coming out. Laurie keeps his affairs so close, and that old house of theirs has become such an ogre's castle, nobody can peep in through the keyhole even. You, Bellingham, who manage to pick up every shred of gossip for the clubs and drums, must have heard of this before?"

"Never, upon my life!" said Bellingham, eagerly. "But what a rich titbit we have now! If my eyes did n't deceive me, that pretty head had a very affectionate cant toward Laurie's shoulder when he led the drooping sufferer indoors. By Jove, it 's an elopement, or I 'll eat my hat!"

"Then, as dusk begins to favor us, we 'll see the end of it," added Warriner. "By stepping behind this friendly wooden Indian who serves the tobacco-

nist as a sign we can stay a few minutes unobserved by casual eyes."

"What will the Hopes say to these divagations of their son and heir!" went on Bellingham, savoring the choice morsel under his tongue. "The proudest woman we have is the old dowager Hope, and her ruling passion the desire that this son shall build up the family fortunes by a wealthy match. And only this afternoon Laurie was playing swain to your bewitching cousin. How will the lovely widow bear wreathing her head with willows for such a rival?"

"There is little to fear in that regard," said Warriner, contemptuously. "My cousin, like all pretty women, may enjoy making sunshine and storm for her admirers, but when the time comes for definite choice another than Hope may be in question."

Bellingham, although a fop and quidnunc, was quick enough to perceive the proprietary note in the other's voice, and could not resist an attempt to tease him.

"Oh! I'm an echo of common talk, that's all," he said, shrugging. "And any man with half an eye could have seen that Madam Lucilla's gaze was all for Laurie last night and to-day. Take my advice, Warriner, and if you are interested in the chances of any aspirant for the widow's hand, contrive to let her know of the pretty scene we have just enjoyed. Hist! Here is a hackney-coach drawing up opposite, and egad! Master Laurie steps out of it. I would n't have missed this for a kingdom. Prodigious fun, is n't it?"

While Arnold Warriner's sluggish passion for Lu-

cilla was thus fired to instant activity, and the two observers drew back into an alleyway whence they could still further pursue their investigations, Laurence Hope rushed into the little shop.

"La, captain, you startled me!" cried Mrs. Pips; who had returned behind her counter to vend lollypops to a deliberating urchin. "Go in, sir; you'll find all quiet again, and the young person none the worse for her faint turn. 'T is but a step to Queen Street, sir, and I think she might walk; but you know best—gentlefolks know best. Miss Watson ought to be grateful all her life for such kindness and condescension on your part. A tidy, industrious girl, captain, as I'm sure your mother has found out; and comes o' decent, God-fearin' people. Before Job Watson took up carpenterin', and bought his little place, he was hired to help in a tool-shop near ours. And though I'm a Churchwoman and they Presbyterians, we'd never a word pass between us but what was befitting good neighbors. They do say, captain, that Eve is gettin' finer prices than ever from the gentry for her lacework and those grand darns she puts into silken hose. Vastly kind o' Madam Hope to allow miss to make a nest-egg for herself. Should n't wonder, now, if she's given her money all to Job to lay by for her! Canny folks, those Scotch-Irish, as poor Pips used to say. Can't think what she'd do with her earnings, if they're not in bank. Plain as a pikestaff in her dress, and that straw hat bleached three times."

"Eve, dear," said the young man, when, finally escaping the beldam's eloquence, he went into the room

behind the shop, "I have brought a coach, as you desired, and purpose to drive out with you to your father's, telling him frankly the circumstances of our case, and that I am ready to keep my pledge to you. Don't say me nay. I should feel like a poor stick if I let you go there alone, at this hour, after having been turned out of my mother's house under such conditions. I have been thinking it over since I left you, and there seems but one way for an honorable man to act."

"I, too, have been thinking it over, Laurie," replied the girl, resolutely; "and if I was weak enough to give way and cause you such trouble awhile ago, I am strong now. I shall never consent to afflict your poor mother by asking her to countenance our marriage. Already I have forgiven the hard words her passion wrung from her. I should return, God knows, if she would have me, and do for her as before. But that can never be now. I have a home waiting for me, and will go to it. Humble as it is, I can find happiness, or at least content, in doing my duty. By and by my father will see that I am not, as he thinks, spoiled for him by living with people above my sphere. I will make myself needful to him. You will find some one more fit for you—some one who would never be a reproach, a thing to apologize for, a person to be explained before she could be accepted."

"Is this you, Eve? I'll swear I hardly know you!" exclaimed the young man, bewildered at her passionate earnestness.

"Nobody knows me, I think," said Eve, smiling

mournfully; "and least of all my own father. The truth is that all this reading to your father about the doctrines of the new government had set me to pondering and studying out the question of social equality, till I suppose I thought the real me good enough to accept your love and try to make your happiness. But I was self-deceived. Your mother has shown me that, whatever their theories, the time is not ripe for American aristocrats to put that into practice. And, Laurie, there is something else—something that for days past I've tried to nerve myself to say to you. I've been thinking that your fancy for me has cooled; that you acted on impulse when you asked me to be your wife. If this is true, how much better that we should part now than let our bond go on till it becomes a chain on you!"

"Poor little Eve!" sighed the young man, compassionately.

There was nothing of the coxcomb in his sympathy. Eve, recognizing this, did not shrink from it. The mortal pang was that truthful Laurence could not bring himself to contradict her statement that his love for her was diminished.

"Say no more about it now, little girl," he said gently. "You have suffered too much, and through no fault of yours, to-day, and have still an ordeal before you. Eve, I would give anything to spare you this interview with your father—to help you through it, if I could—"

"You can't help me, Laurie. If you were there it would be far, far worse. But although he is violent, my father is a conscientious man, and will in time see

that I have done nothing to shame him, even if I am sent away in apparent disgrace from my employers' home."

"It is your home—or will be one day, if you will take it, Eve," he exclaimed hotly.

"Laurie! as if I did n't know you to be the most generous, impulsive fellow alive—one who would share your last shilling with a friend in distress! Don't let your pity for me run away with your judgment. Go back, dear, to your parents. They will be needing some one sorely now at this very hour. Old Chloe can never make them as comfortable as I could. You'll tell her not to forget your father's drops at nine, won't you—and a spoonful of port wine in your mother's gruel before she goes to sleep? Oh, Laurie, it breaks my heart to have to leave them to themselves!"

"Then come back with me, Eve, and let me make peace between you and my mother."

"She would never forgive me that!" cried Eve, shuddering away from the arm he put around her. "No, no; let me go to my own people, whom I should never have left!"

"But I refuse to have you break with me, remember," he protested, holding his head erect, with a gleam of obstinate purpose in his eyes, that she, alas! had seen in other, older eyes like his that day. "My mother knows that I will not submit to be coerced. She shall answer to me for her cruelty to you!"

"Laurie, Laurie, her heart is bound up in you! She is an old, broken woman, and you must be merciful to her as you are strong."

Clinging to his arm and looking pleadingly into his face, she would not part with him until he had given her his promise to deal gently with his mother; that secured, she let him put her into the coach.

"The driver tells me that 'two of the gentry' were over yonder whispering and spying on our actions till a minute since," he said, following her within the vehicle. "And, if that be the case, there may be annoyance in store for you from some impertinent fellows who might see you set off unprotected. I insist upon accompanying you till you are within sight of home; and then, if you must, you may go the rest of the way alone."

Eve's protest was in vain. In another moment they were driving at a brisk pace up-town and eastward in the direction of the Boston Road.

Under a swinging oil-lantern with which a street official had just faintly illuminated the darkness before Mrs. Pips's shop door, Warriner and Bellingham saw the couple set off upon their drive.

"The best luck! To think that we should have seen it with our own eyes, not heard it at a miserable second hand, after half the tongues in town had prated the tidings to their next-door neighbors," cried Bellingham, slapping his thigh in an ecstasy. "Laurie Hope, the son and heir of the most confoundedly uppish family in the town, to run off with a little baggage of a serving-woman—and all the aristocratic fair left in the lurch! Favorite against the field! Gad! Warriner, I can't rest till I 'm among the people who have n't heard the news!"

"Did you speak?" asked Captain Warriner.

Now that he had something to reveal that Lucilla could not doubt, he had begun to study ways and means by which to convey the intelligence to her without letting Hope be aware that he had condescended to play the spy upon his movements. As he knew by experience, Hope was not a man to be trifled with; and Arnold had no mind to have an "affair of honor" on his hands at this critical moment when courtship, not fighting, was the occupation of his thoughts. As for little Bellingham, Hope would not consider him a foeman worthy of his steel.

III



FROM the moment when Job Watson with his wife and baby had quitted his birth-place in a green hillside village in the north of Ireland to take packet for America, it had been his resolve to own land in the New World.

To that end all else was subordinated. The foot of a stocking serving to hold shillings, wrenched from his scant wages, gave place in time to a strong box of his own fabrication, wherein guineas were hoarded until transferred to the bank.

After his wife's death and his daughter's engagement in the service of Madam Hope left him free from such minor considerations as the care of woman-kind, Job toiled until his ambition was attained. He became the proprietor of a small house standing amid several acres of field and orchard on the east side of the island, some three miles out of town. It was just above where the tunnel of the Fourth Avenue Railway now sees passengers speeding in swift trolley-cars underground and out to the Grand Central station and upper Madison Avenue.

The locality, while isolated, was on high ground, close to one of the main arteries of coach travel into the interior of the State. Job's dwelling, although he

would have preferred a different style of architecture, happened to be a trim little crow-gabled cottage of Dutch pattern, standing amid fruit-trees now flushed with apple-blooms. The bowerie surrounding it was under fair cultivation, and in the outbuildings Job had already installed a cow, two pigs, an oldish horse bought cheap, and a miscellany of ducks and geese and chickens.

Beneath a pear-tree in the yard he had placed a couple of beehives in deference to his one sentimental recollection of early youth in the old country—that of his weeping mother going out to whisper to the bees that his little brother had passed out of life. A few lilac-bushes and straggling syringas stood between the door-stone and the gate leading in from a rough road that straggled up from the public highway. Job's east windows, whether shining in the morning sun, jet black in the shadows of afternoon, or vaguely red at night from the economical glow within, were a sort of pharos to the neighbors scattered on the lower grounds to the southward, or nearer the East River.

Few of those neighbors felt tempted to go up the hill on fellowship intent. Job's temper was not hospitable, even when they carried him a nice job of carpentry, or when some fine piece of furniture belonging to the gentry, for which an ordinary craftsman would not suffice, was sent on from the shop whither it had been taken for repair. For Job would no longer work with journeymen, and kept his tools sharp more from habit than conscience.

The feet that oftenest came up the hilly road were those of Luke Adamson, a young man after Job's own

pattern in the matter of thrift and industry. He was a tall, brown, heavy-featured fellow of thirty, slow of speech, slow of action, but possessed of a dogged determination to carry to an end things begun. Having already laid up a respectable sum of money in his trade as joiner, and bought for himself a little house, some of Job's old customers had learned to resort to him, and more were coming. In his begrudging way, Job certainly favored Adamson more than any other of his acquaintances.

People thought this was on account of Luke's having come out of the same county with the Watsons, although at a later date. Common speculation pointed to a marriage between the stalwart youngster and Job's fine-lady daughter, since they had been seen together walking after church in the wake of Eve's somber sire. With the "good will and fixtures" of his father-in-law's trade, and Luke's capacity for work, to say nothing of Eve's needlework and patronage among the great families of the town, Adamson's chances were considered to be pretty well assured.

But nobody envied Luke his prospects. To live in that relation with crabbed Master Watson was a pill few young men were prepared to swallow. And most of them considered it a risky business to take up with a wife trained among the gentlefolk. On the rare occasions when the girl relapsed into association with her own class, she made them feel their deficiencies and fidget for an easier-going comrade.

Public opinion condemned Job's cupidity for sending his girl away from him to earn her bread, instead of keeping her to make tidy his own hearthstone.

Eligible females who had previously aspired in vain to perform that function were wont to say that Mr. Watson was a hard man in more ways than one, and they pitied the poor thing, be she the wife or daughter, that would have to keep house for him. Young and old combined to decide that Luke Adamson would rue the day when he tried to get a piece of porcelain to stand upon his shelf, instead of the work-a-day delft everywhere to be had for the asking.

Adamson, apparently, did not covet delft. He defied his critics in the exasperating way of men, who in all ages have followed their own perverted ideas about selecting wives. From the beginning of their acquaintance he had loved Eve with the full strength of his tenacious heart. For her sake he had submitted to the yoke of Job, until he had won that far-seeing parent to look upon him as a son and the literal prop of his old age. When Eve stood beside her father in his pew at church—looking, the people said, like a governor's, or at least a general's, lady—Luke gazed at her from a distance, yearning for the day when he should have amassed the sum of money Job required to see laid down before he would give consent to their marriage.

After service Adamson used to join the Watsons and walk with them to the door of the Hope mansion, where they parted in the street. Job did not ask his daughter to go home with him oftener than once a month, since it was too far for her to walk both ways, and he liked his horse and cart to be idle on the Sabbath.

Luke's best outlet for a lover's feelings was to be-

stow upon his fair one bunches of wild blossoms from the woods on the upper part of the island, or to leave at the Hopes' back door strings of fish of his taking and game of his shooting. He was surprised at the animation of her thanks for these latter favors. How could he imagine that while the flowers went to deck Mrs. Hope's room, the edibles, after passing through old Chloe's hands, were transferred on silver dishes and platters of costly china to furnish forth the meager table of Eve's employers.

And here comes in Eve's secret, hoarded jealously in her faithful breast—a secret she would have died rather than reveal to Laurence Hope. For more than a year past she had been not only receiving no wages from his parents, but in order to supply them with needed delicacies and comforts was surreptitiously engaged by night and at odd moments in fulfilling commissions in needlework from the dames of high society.

Strange caprice of heredity that implanted in Job Watson's child this spirit of tenderest self-sacrifice! Eve's delight when she found herself able to give to these poor gentlefolk dependent on her care, and half unconscious of their decadent fortune, was rapturous. Her position as manager of finances enabling her to act without fear of interference, her chief dread had been that in some way Laurence might find out a fact so humiliating to his pride. But Laurence had never been taken into his parents' confidence about their affairs, and Eve exerted all her powers to keep him ignorant. Anything rather than cut down the slender income with which the captain supported the family honors before the world!

Another source of anxiety was the forced diminution of the sum her father had always exacted from her earnings to lay aside, as he said, until her marriage-day. To provide this and fulfil the other claims upon her slender purse taxed her to the utmost. Job, indignant at her supposed decrease of pay, had seriously threatened to take her away from service altogether, and to marry her to Adamson. Only last Sunday he had told her that he would soon demand her release from the Hopes.

And Eve, torn by conflicting emotions, now felt herself doubly a guilty creature, in that not only had she held back from her father a "part of her price," but concealed from him, as from Hope's parents, her far greater offense in exchanging vows of affection with Laurence! It was under this double burden that she bent.

Oppressed by these reflections, and filled with poignant grief that the hour had come for parting with her lover,—with whom she had hardly exchanged a word during their drive,—Eve quitted the coach at the foot of the hill upon which stood her father's cottage. By the light of a horn lantern lent her by the friendly coachman, and carrying her bag in the other hand, she began picking her way up the uneven surface of a short cut to the top of the ascent.

In vain had Laurence urged her again to let him go with her and at least explain to Job that her parting with his family involved nothing to her discredit. Eve's common sense convinced him that he was the last advocate to plead her cause with success. But

his parting words were: "Remember, I consider myself bound."

He pressed her hand, and watched the glimmer of her lantern recede farther and farther up the path, until it reached the crest of the hill, where it hovered for a moment, uncertainly, before the gleam of Job's taper shooting out through the uncurtained pane to meet it. Then it went out altogether, and Laurence, with a heavy sigh, gave the order to drive back to town.

When he reached town, paid and dismissed the driver, and walked home, gloom filled his heart. Letting himself into the silent old house, he mounted the wide, winding stairs, which from above surrounded a well of darkness that seemed to be peopled with phantoms of the past. On the upper landing, he tapped at the door of a chamber converted, for the use of the invalids, into an up-stairs parlor.

No answer. Pushing the door open, he stepped into the dimly lighted room. The noise of his entrance roused from napping the old man sitting amid the pillows of his easy-chair, before a handful of wood embers in a grate.

"You're back at last, Eve?" asked a querulous voice. "Deuce take it if I know what has bewitched this house to-day. Old Chloe seems to have gone out of her wits. She came in here just now and babbled something about your being out, and the supper late, and my wife ailing. Now you are here, all's right, lassie. No wine whey or slops for me, remember. Get me something savory—"

"It is I, father; not Eve—" began Laurence, but was interrupted peevishly:

"And where 's Eve, pray? The only person in the house that's got a head on her shoulders! What does everybody mean by leaving me here alone? Not that I'm not glad to see you, Laurie, my boy, but it's a brisk little woman who can trot about, and make things comfortable, that a man needs most when he comes to be where I am. Goin' to the ball, eh? Dropped in to show me your fine new uniform, have you? Begad, you're a good-looking fellow, sir, if I do say it. A figure like mine when I was your age. Make my respects to his Excellency, the President, and say I would wait on him to-night—but— Eve, Eve, I say! is my supper never comin'?"

While Laurence in his awkward way attempted to do for his father the things he had seen Eve accomplish with so light a touch, old Chloe, carrying a tray, hurried into the room.

"Thank the Lawd, you're here, Marse Laurie," she exclaimed, then added in a tone meant for his ear alone: "We ain't dared let old master know yet."

"My mother—she is ill?" he said in the same undertone, struck with foreboding by her somber air.

"Oh, sir, you have n't heard? And we have been sending everywhere to find you. Step outside in the entry, sir, till I give old master his food, and I'll tell you all."

"I will go to her room at once," he said impatiently.

"No, sir; please not now, Marse Laurie. Some one's in there you would n't like to meet. Oh, honey, for Gawd's sake, don't let poor old master know till he's had his supper and night's rest."

Despite her whispered pleadings, Laurence went out and strode across the hall to his mother's door. It was locked, but in answer to his knock a strange, grim woman came out to meet him.

"She's quite ready now, captain, and looking beautiful," said the functionary, pursing her lips with professional pride. "Twenty years younger, anybody 'd say, and a treat to see her smile."

"Marse Laurie, dear, I wanted to spare you this," exclaimed the old slave-woman, hobbling in pursuit of him.

"When did it occur?" he asked in a voice that did not seem his own.

"We don't know exactly, honey. My poor lady had hot words with Miss Eve, and ordered her out of the house. After Miss Eve left, my mistress came in here and told me to keep away. 'Bout an hour later, when old master told me to call her for a game of cribbage, I found her lying half across the bed. She must have thrown herself down to cry. She could n't ha' lived without Miss Eve, poor dear. I could ha' told her that. We sent for the doctors, but 't was some time before we got 'em here. 'T was the heart, they said. There war n't anything earthly could ha' saved her. But don't you think we did n't try to find you, honey—for we did."

Laurence, shaking the affectionate old creature off, went inside and closed the door.

IV



RS. WARRINER'S maid and household had never found their mistress more hard to please than on the day succeeding her kettledrum. Lucilla had slept ill, awakened late, gone out for an early airing in her sedan-chair, had refused to see inquiring friends, and been pettish with her mama.

When, at three o'clock, dinner was announced, the lady was in her joseph with her hair down about her ears, reading a book of poems, and declining all food save a cup of bohea and two little tarts of the variety known as maids of honor, in the construction of which Mrs. Warriner's cook was not excelled. This light refection was served in her own room, and immediately afterward Madam Chester announced (through the keyhole, for the tiff between the two ladies was still on) that, since her daughter preferred to keep herself so close, she presumed there was no objection to her taking the chariot and pair for the remainder of the day.

"None whatever," said Lucilla, opening the door far enough to exhibit the tip of her little nose. "I had not intended going out, and I hope you will enjoy your drive."

"And find my child in a better temper when I come

back from it!" supplemented the dowager, briskly. "I'll vow, Lucilla, you are growing more like your poor father every day. Surely it was not from me that you got this habit of seeking your own convenience, and not allowing any one around you to say their soul's their own—"

"Will you not tell me this, too, when you come back, mama?" asked Lucilla, angelically meek, but still holding the door on the chink, and determined not to yield it, at the risk of an hour-long lecture.

"Lucilla, you are sadly wanting in the respect due a parent. But if you will just let me tell you about that chit of a laundry-maid of yours, whom I caught flirting with the footman—"

"When you come back, mama," persisted the lady of the house.

Madam Chester flounced off in a pet, which, however, disappeared as by magic when she found herself installed upon the brocaded cushions of the chariot, with a coachman in front and two footmen at her back. What would the Albany people who had known her in her pinched days say, could they see her now? And, as luck had it, no sooner did the shining carriage with its champing bays and stately servitors turn into the Bowery Road, and while madam was in the act of bowing and smiling to another private equipage as fine, than she espied a lady from her native city, gazing at her from the shabby depths of a hackney-coach, wherein the stranger had been well content to view the fashionable drive.

Then who so radiant, so condescending, as the

widow Warriner's mama? Madam Chester, settling her hood and tippet, called to the coachman to go slow, following up her first bow to her old acquaintance by a series of nods whenever the hackney-coach, taking heart of grace, ventured to move up and be abreast the grander vehicle. The only drawback to the dowager's now complete satisfaction was the fact that she could not fully distinguish the expression of the Albany dame's countenance without putting on the huge silver-rimmed distance-spectacles that had been imported for her from London. In those days a self-respecting woman who was getting along in life preferred to be blind in public, rather than disfigure her appearance by such a pair of frights!

But, all told, one lady from Albany impressed by the splendor of another, resident in New York, could not entirely dissipate the cares attendant upon Madam Chester's position as owner and chaperon of the chief toast and richest heiress of the time. She could not help associating her daughter's whimsical humor of to-day with some complication arising from one of the troublesome sex. And the mere hint of such a thing gave her an agitating pang.

With all the strength of her dominating nature the mother had tried to disincline her child to a second venture in matrimony. In this she was at least consistent, since 't was well known in Albany circles how Madam Chester had herself refused the Rev. Dr. Kershaw, a suitor of her girlhood's days, who had wooed her twice within the year after Mr. Chester's demise; not to speak of others, less impassioned than the divine.

No! Madam Chester was, and had long been, out of conceit of the married state for women! Let all who wished a yoke put their heads into it. The constant presence in the house of an imperative, unreasonable, illogical, irritable masculine, sanctioned by Providence to cross, thwart, contradict, and peck at the so-called partner of his privileges, had been experienced once by Lucilla and herself. That should suffice. To her mind, Lucilla's present position, brilliant, free as air, surrounded, fêted, flattered, and on the very top of the social wave, was not to be exchanged for any other so far in sight.

The risk was that her child would let herself be cajoled or gossiped into a change of state. Madam Chester had no patience with that universal hue and cry about whom a widow will take next, directly her black is lightened. In order to keep Lucilla's thoughts composed on this subject, had not she made a point of resurrecting the late Mr. Warriner—keeping him and his edicts continually before the household and its mistress? Really, one would think it was she, not Lucilla, who systematically mourned the departed! Something in Lucilla's manner yesterday, during and after the kettledrum, had excited her alarm. Of all the men present there were but two for whom those blushes, that girlish tremor,—ill concealed from her mother,—could have been assumed. Which of these two was it?

Not Arnold Warriner, Madam Chester hoped and prayed. The mere fact that he was to inherit the estate in the event of Lucilla's death made the mother inimical to him. She fancied him treacherous when-

ever he asked how Lucilla did. And if he now wanted to marry her child, was it not the same as acknowledging that Lucilla's good health was his despair? Of course he coveted the money and the rule of the Manor and to take the control of things out of Lucilla's (and Madam Chester's) hands. Trust that kind of a smooth, specious fellow for plotting and planning for his own advancement!

Besides,—last, not least,—had not Warriner always coolly ignored the dowager, and once trodden upon her spaniel's toe?

There was no assurance that Lucilla really favored him. She was so very outspoken in his praise, and let him attend her everywhere. Was there not more danger in the direction of Captain Laurence Hope?

Of all the offensive class of eligible young men, Madam Chester had least fault to find with Hope.

Once, long ago, there had been a ball, when Mr. Christopher Hope, Laurence's father, had declared her to be the most bewitching minikin in the room. "Bewitching minikin"! She had worn her pink tabbiset. And afterward, at the supper, he had pledged her in a glass of Constantia wine. People began to say—but it ended there!

Next year he had married Laurence's mother, and she had remained single for three years longer. She always maintained Mr. Christopher Hope to be the finest beau of his day. Now he was old and poor and a cripple in his chair, and his wife had gone all to pieces in her looks. Much better that things had turned out as they did; but still, Madam Chester would always remember "bewitching minikin."

Laurence Hope was certainly handsome as a picture, and better than the rest of her child's hangers-on. If it were he for whom Lucilla had blushed and palpitated, Madam Chester might even partially condone the folly; but it would never do to encourage him too far. The Hopes were as poor as church-mice, a family of "has-beens" on the verge of ruin. It would be really nothing of a match should Lucilla—but of course Lucilla would n't. Madam Chester settled that.

Thus scheming, speculating, dreaming old dreams, and casting horoscopes for the confusion of young men, the dowager rolled on her way through the pleasant rural countryside along what is now Third Avenue, crossing Murray Hill on the line of Lexington Avenue, and bearing westward to McGowan's Pass, now the upper end of Central Park.

Here, on such a day of jocund spring, met and crossed and overtook each other the equipages of men and women of first distinction in the temporary seat of government.

The President, out behind six horses, acknowledged all salutations with a courtly bow. The Vice-President and Mrs. Adams had driven over from their seat at Richmond Hill, near Lispenard's Meadows, where Varick and Charlton streets now intersect.

There were the Secretary of War and jolly, portly Mrs. Knox, whose brusque speeches and original doings were quoted and gossiped about everywhere; Sir William Temple beside his lady, *née* Bowdoin of Boston, one of the chief dinner-givers of the town; the Secretary and Mrs. Jay, whose still existing

supper-list records the fine flower of that society; Colonel Alexander Hamilton with his spouse, who joined to the graces all the candor and simplicity of the American wife, said M. Brissot de Warville; Mrs. Peter van Brugh Livingston, the Livingstons of Clermont and Queen Street, the New Jersey Livingstons, M. and Mme. de la Forest, the Clintons, Duanes, Izards, Bayards, Keans, Van Zandts, Van Rensselaers, Gerrys, Langdons, Edgars, McCombs, Kings, Clarksons, Variicks, Bishop Provost and wife, Whites, Beekmans, Ludlows, Bards, Rutherfurds, Van Cortlandts, Montgomerys, Lynches, Fishes—a goodly company, a representative or two of each of which families always helped to swell society's tide.

Among the titled ladies of the republican court, besides Lady Temple, were the widowed Lady Sterling, her daughter, Lady Mary Watts, and the more famous and fascinating Lady Kitty Duer.

Lady Kitty had been ten years married to Colonel William Duer, but her charm and vogue were not in the least exhausted, in the estimation of her townspeople. Only the year before she had played ministering angel to Baron Steuben, when that hero and Secretary Jay were both wounded by stones thrown in the people's riot against the New York medicos. Whenever Lady Kitty went abroad all eyes followed her with pride.

Lady Christina Griffen took the air beside her dignified husband, the president of the old Congress. The Spanish minister, D'Yrujo, was away, but the Marquise de Moustier, who wore ear-rings and red-heeled shoes, sat with Mme. de Bréhan, opposite that lady's black

page, who nursed her monkey on his knees. The Dutch envoy, M. Berckel, brought his pretty daughter, one of the season's belles. Young Frank Berckel was seen, perched upon the box of a mail-phaëton so high as to have been caricatured in public print. There was extant a representation of the passage beneath it of a low pony-trap belonging to the good physician, Dr. John Charlton, long familiar to the public eye in his red coat and cocked hat, accompanied by his aged negro groom.

Among the other notabilities whose appearance made memorable a May drive in 1789 were Chancellor Livingston, Burr, Steuben, Brissot de Warville, Gardoqui, Richard Henry Lee, Arthur Lee, General Henry Lee, Schuyler, Mason, Fisher Ames, Butler, Armstrong, De Peyster, Walton, Cadwalader, Richard Harison, Alsop, Rutledge, Edmund Randolph—many a giant in debate and master of statecraft who helped to make our nation what it is. Match me this gathering in Central Park or Riverside Drive to-day!

On and on, serene in her borrowed plumage, passed Madam Chester. So exhilarated was she by good company, fine clothes, and dazzling sunshine, it never occurred to her to notice that from the cortège of golden youth deployed around her were missing both Arnold Warriner and Laurence Hope.

No sooner had Lucilla's horses and their burden trotted away from her front door than that languid lady sprang from her easy-chair, ran to the windows, pulled back the chintz curtains, and rang for her maids.

Her hair dressed over a beautiful crape cushion,

quick as she could set her slow-moving ebon damsels into action, open flew drawers and wardrobes, till the room was strewn with gowns and falbalas, successively presented for approbation to their owner.

In vain did Saba and Myrtila hold out the choicest treasures of her wearing-apparel. Petticoat and paduasoy, tuckers, frills, and neckerchiefs, failed to attract. She would not even smile upon her new lustring the color of a pigeon's neck, shot with rose and lavender and blue, like gleams of dawn in an early-morning sky—the one *mama* had said Mr. Warriner would not approve of till after the 6th of June, when the two calendar years of her mourning would have expired. But Lucilla did not discard this because it was too gay. The sad fact was, she wanted something gayer.

“Look, Myrtila, on the top shelf in the north cupboard,” said the widow, finally, endeavoring to subdue the faint tremble of exultation in her voice. “You will find there a pale-blue sarsenet. ’T is of the fashion of two years back, and I dare say I shall look a barbarous fright in it. But I’ve a mind to try whether”—here she paused and invented a daring flight—“whether I’ve grown stout in growing old.”

Cunning Lucilla! Well she knew that the girlish outlines of her rounded form had but taken on more stately beauty since her emancipation.

“Mistis looks lovely in blue,” said Myrtila, presently. “If mistis was to put on her new neckerchief of satin-striped gauze! Run, Saba! what you mean by staring, child? Run fetch mistis’ box of neckerchiefs. There, now, I’clare to gracious, it’s too pretty

for anything! Would n't think mistis was over eighteen, to look at her. What flowers for the belt, mistis? That bunch o' white star-flowers that came yesterday with a gentleman's card tied onto it? Mistis took the card and put it in her lacquer cabinet. The flowers are fresh, mistis took such good care of 'em."

"It is not your business to know what I do with things, Myrtilla," flashed out the lady, sharply. "But you may bring me the nosegay of which you speak. I believe I left it on the stand in my dressing-room by the open window."

"Found one of them posies under her pillow when I made her bed," whispered Myrtilla to Saba, as she passed that handmaiden by. "Reckon mistis thinks a heap more of 'em than she 's willing to let on."

With all their warm, color-loving natures, the black damsels had enjoyed the fairy-tale of their lady's translation into gay young life. The whole household flourished and waxed fat in these days of generous living, abundant company, and interchange with the social world. But the two lady's-maids had about made up their minds that it was time "mistis" was letting the sentimental element take possession of her life. Eagerly they now watched for straws to show which way the wind blew!

And at last Lucilla stands before her toilet-table, surveying her image in a round mirror surmounted by a gilded swan. From the darkling depths smiles back at her a vision of perfected womanhood! The blue sarsenet, whatever its deficiencies in mode, was delightfully becoming. From the soft folds of Italian gauze crossed over her bust rose a throat white as

cream, and above, a rosy, happy face. In her belt, close to the beatings of her heart, nestled a bunch of white narcissus. But something was yet lacking.

"Quick, Myrtila! My patch-box—though I shall wear only one to-day."

The black atom, moistened upon the tip of her tongue, was for some time poised on her finger at a little distance from her face. Whether to place it on chin or cheek, that was the question. In the end, she remembered what the "Book of the Toylet" said: "A beauty-spot upon the temple giveth a sedate air"; and, with a sigh, clapped the tiny thing above her left eyebrow.

"Now, Myrtila, since I am tired of trying on, you may go, and I will sit down as I am and do a sprig of my embroidery. By and by I will call you to change me to my silver-gray."

"Mistis must n't change. Mistis must keep like she is now, and let all the beaus that call see her!" pleaded Myrtila, genuinely eager.

"No, no, no. Of course not. How can you think of such a thing? I shall wear no colors till after—" The 6th of June occurred to her, and she hastened to put the dismal thought away. Certainly there would be no harm in remaining dressed as she was till nearly five o'clock. He would not be likely to step through the garden gate till five.

She sat on alone, worked two sprigs, knocked over a china shepherdess, cut the cards to see whether he would come or not, then took up a copy of Pope's "Essay on Man," and read, to compose her mind.

Inevitable result !

Lucilla was awakened by the clock on the landing striking five vigorous strokes. Alarmed, she sprang to her feet. The house was quiet. Below-stairs her indulged servants were amusing themselves in their own way. Lucilla, never stopping to think what gown she had on, ran down the broad steps with their railing of carved mahogany, across the Turkey rugs spread on the polished boards of the lower hall, past some tapestries of Gobelins that she thought ugly things, into the drawing-room, where the women had just been putting fresh flowers and boughs of blossoming shrubs into every vase, making a carnival of spring.

No one there ! Breathing easier, she went out into the garden in the rear.

That, too, was empty. Lucilla, trying to walk as befitted the mistress of the mansion, stepped down a gravel path, on either side of which, under a verdant canopy of leaves, box hedges shut off borders filled with bushes in recent leaf and bud, and the flamboyant flowers of the Northern spring.

Since it was the family's habit to retire to their seat on the Hudson with the first warm days of June, the gardener's orders were to decorate these beds and parterres with whatever made April and May most beautiful. Thus had he delayed the bloom of tulips and jonquils, and hastened that of lilies-of-the-valley and bleeding-hearts. The result was as if the earth had broken up in flowers. And beyond the trees, at the lower end, flowed the silver current of the broad river ; beyond that again rose the far green

heights in New Jersey, more beautiful only in their many-hued garments of October.

In pleasant proximity to the water stood a kiosk of latticework, covered with thick foliage, in which a bench and table offered repose to the passer-by. Here Lucilla dropped into a seat, her fears and coquetries merged suddenly and irresistibly into the thrilling realization of her first passion. She could struggle against it no longer. She did love him, devotedly, tenderly. For his sake she would as lief abandon all her state and riches to follow him like a beggar-maid throughout the world.

Since she might not put away these riches, what joy, what glory, to lavish them on him! She had heard of the failing fortunes of his family, of the necessity upon him to deny himself many things enjoyed by other men of his rank and place; and her chief fear was lest these circumstances might continue to keep him at a distance. During a restless night she had convinced herself that they alone were accountable for his brusque, almost rude manner at their parting the day before.

The revealer of sweet secrets called intuition had assured her that Laurence's heart was really hers. It could be, then, only his poverty that kept him from declaring himself. And to Lucilla that seemed such a little, little thing. What were her youth, her charms, her fervor, if she could not conquer that?

A man's step upon the gravel.

Lucilla clasped her hands in a supreme effort to hold herself in restraint. With her breath shortened by the quick pulsing of her heart, against which his

flowers rested, her blushes rising, her eyes deeper with feeling than any one had ever before seen them, she turned to meet her lover, and beheld, instead—Arnold Warriner!

Cruel disappointment! Her voice sounded thin as she cried out to him:

“You here? I gave no orders. I wanted to be alone.”

“I felt sure of it, sweet cousin,” he said placatingly; “and, believe me, I should never have followed up the hint Pompey gave about his mistress being out of doors had I not thought you would be inclined for a little chat with me.”

“Chat? I am tired of chat! Tired of gossips and prating tongues, and of my house being a thoroughfare for idle people!” she exclaimed, with scant civility.

Arnold bore it well. With a slight shrug, he said:

“I had thought my late cousin’s home was open to his nearest kinsman; but it seems I was overtrustful of Mrs. Warriner’s hospitality; and, if it so pleases her, I shall go.”

“No, no, Arnold; stay till I have asked your pardon for my pettishness. I slept little last night, and have had much to worry me. I sent mama off in the chariot in order to have a long afternoon alone. If you must go now, come back and sup with us later, and give me my revenge at piquet,” she concluded, with a little too much cordiality.

Warriner fixed his eyes upon her as if to read her soul.

“You want to be rid of me, Lucilla? Me, who have—”

"Oh, please don't!" she interrupted, detecting with dismay a sentimental cadence in his tones. "Be content that you have made me feel ashamed of my bad manners. I suppose the country mouse can't stand living with the town mice. At any rate, I am out of tune with people."

Although she seemed desirous to make amends, Arnold saw the young woman was unhinged, nervous, impatient of interruption. For the first time, he owned to himself that this might mean preoccupation with thoughts of another man, and a wave of jealous resentment swept over him. Could it be that Bellingham's babble of the night before had foundation in reality? That while he, Arnold, had been dawdling, deliberating in the primrose path, Hope had marched boldly up to the citadel and taken it by storm?

Yet never, to Arnold's knowledge, had the two met in private. Hope's opportunities were those of every other caller in the discreet Lucilla's drawing-room. When they had been seen in company together, Hope had, rather than otherwise, kept his distance from the widow. The thing was incredible. Arnold Warriner outwitted, outstripped, made to feel himself a boy in the art of which he was passed grand master—the winning of feminine hearts?

"Rumor has it that you are in tune—melodiously in tune—with at least one person of your acquaintance," he said, not pausing to choose his words, his eyes flashing, his handsome mouth wreathed with a curl of satire. "But I can hardly believe that the woman who has the honor to support my family's

name and place could stoop from her eminence to care for a—”

“Take care, cousin,” put in Lucilla, now more under control than he. Her light laugh stung him.

“I tell you it is a scoundrel you are permitting to toy with your fancy,” he blurted out, beside himself. “A man doubly false if he has let you think you rule his heart.”

“Whatever he is,—for I shall not deny that I know to whom you would allude,” she said haughtily,—“Captain Hope will soon be here to answer for himself.”

“You are expecting him—him?” exclaimed Wariner, opening wide his eyes. “Is it possible you alone are unaware of the incident with which all the town is ringing—the death of both of Hope’s parents, within a few hours of each other? But everybody does not know, as I do, the fact of his elopement last evening with Eve Watson, his mother’s pretty serving-girl, which must have precipitated the attack from which the poor lady died.”

“It is false—false!” cried poor Lucilla, starting electrically, and turning deathly pale. “Did you come here to torture me?”

“Heaven knows I did not! I came because I knew that your mother had gone abroad alone, and I wanted the opportunity of a private talk with you on my own account. But I cannot let you—were there no feeling on my part, my relation to you would not permit me to let you—be unwarned about this man. Oh, Lucilla, why did I allow matters to go so far?”

“Speak—tell me—give me proofs!” she cried

wildly, and then dropped exhausted on her bench, burying her head in her hands on the table before her.

Her brain seemed about to burst as she listened to his tale of what Bellingham and he had witnessed the day before in the dusk in front of Mrs. Pips's shop. To follow up the disclosure by giving Hope the benefit of a doubt did not occur to her. In that moment she was only a loving woman, chilled, tricked, scorned, by the man she idolized.

In a flash came back to her Hope's emotion at her suggestion of Eve. With this certainty, reason could have no power to guide her. As impetuously as she had loved, she resented the slight he had put upon her. To go to that low-born girl after leaving her—after stopping, on the way, to send her the flowers so fondly treasured! With a movement of disgust she tore the starry blossoms from below her heart and dashed them upon the gravel. Into this tumult of feeling entered no sympathy for the domestic affliction that had overtaken her false lover. She could feel only that he had deliberately appropriated her love whilst himself the lover of another woman, and had had the misfortune to be found out. Good heavens! how could she have thought of this creature?

Warriner, although he had a man's natural antipathy to scenes in which an hysterical woman takes the leading rôle, held his ground pertinaciously and with considerable tact. He saw that this was no time to press his own claims upon her notice. Rather would he wait until an opportunity might offer to soothe her sorrow and make her feel his virtues in compari-

son with Hope's iniquity. Therefore, when, after a burst of crying, she lifted her tear-stained face toward him, Warriner was gazing at her gently, forbearingly, as one does at a grieved and disappointed child. Lucilla was conscious of a sense of gratitude. Amid her confusion of wounded pride and slain love, it was good to feel that some one wanted to shelter her from evil-doers and lift her up again to her pedestal among women revered and honored.

"Forgive me, Arnold, that I was so cross with you. You are my kind brother, and I thank you for your sympathy. Let us speak no more of one unworthy to be mentioned between us."

"But, cousin," answered the suave captain, "let us give the devil his due. Even if Hope—whom I must regard as a monstrous simpleton—had promised to attend you here, how could he in decency have done so to-day? I have heard that he has returned—has been recalled—to his home. Perhaps he has already repented of last night's flitting; but—"

"Oh, don't! I can't bear you to speak of it so," she interrupted. "If he did repent, trust me, it would not be I who would value so light a love. Cousin," she added drearily, "I need not appeal to your respect for me to keep what you have discovered, so far as I am concerned, to yourself. It is my part to put Captain Hope and his affairs out of my thoughts forever!"

The cruel resolution was too much for her. She faltered and again dropped her face into her hands upon the table.

Arnold remained speechless, immobile, but full of

speculation. He was considering that esoteric condition of femininity, old as the hills, depicted by a writer much later than Arnold Warriner's date who remarked: "With women there 's nothing between two poles of emotion toward an interesting male acquaintance. 'T is either love or hate."

He was filled with wonder at the easy rolling of a great stone from his path. So far as appeared, matters between Lucilla and Hope had not gone to lengths which would leave on her a lasting impression. After this, the widow would not wish to hear Hope spoken of, whatever the outcome of his affair with the beautiful Eve. Most lucky of all was it that the public had not been taken into confidence. No one could positively aver that Lucilla had cared for Hope; and it should be Arnold's task to have a very different rumor shortly spread abroad!

Warriner, judging Hope by himself, did not doubt that he had been playing a double game—making hay with pretty Eve while opportunity offered, and at the same time plotting to win the richest prize in the matrimonial market. As to serious purpose in the "elopement," Arnold could not impute to any man in Hope's circumstances such lunacy.

Hope's present withdrawal, through conventional necessity, from the arena of love-making, was a god-send to Warriner. He had not been able to restrain an uncomfortable fear that, if Hope chose, he could yet smooth matters over; and was haunted by doubts whether no man living but himself could step into the unoccupied niche at Lucilla's side.

The livelong day, until late afternoon, Laurence had

sat like a statue in the room up-stairs, near that which contained the mortal remains of his parents.

Early in the evening we last saw him, they had found Christopher Hope sleeping his last sleep in his bed. He never knew the blow that had robbed him of his wife.

And now only Laurence was left of his long line. Friends had come and gone, but no relatives of his name were there to mourn with him. It had been intolerably slow, the passing of these hours during which he had reckoned up the mile-stones of his life in the old house, vainly sorrowing because he could not recall things done or left undone with reference to the two who lay near him locked in eternal silence.

When their feet should have been carried out from it the young man felt that he would wish to fly forever from the ghostly place. Continually he longed for the light step and gentle voice of Eve. With her were associated the only stirrings of young and wholesome life these rooms had known since he and his brother had sported there as boys. It had been so good to meet the gleam in Eve's eye responsive to his occasional bursts of youthful spirit. He recalled their whispered conversations, their smothered laughs, their comradeship, the fact that they were the only ones in the house on the hither side of half a century in age!

Eve would have known how to answer the kind inquiries, the neighborly offers, that all day had been coming in, and that he had repulsed so stupidly; and oh, how he wanted to have with him somebody who

had loved *them*—somebody to weep for him the tears that would not come into his own eyes!

But Eve did not come. Early in the day he had despatched a note to her, as was her due, telling her the sad story of his bereavement. He had felt so sure it would bring her that he did not stop to consider what might keep her back.

And there was a deeper disappointment rankling in his heart. News in that small community flew fast, and it was not possible Mrs. Warriner had not heard of his misfortune. Among all the cards and notes and offered sympathies, there had been none from her. Could it be that she willingly ignored him?

If ever woman read man's heart in his eyes, she must have seen, when they parted yesterday, that he loved her—only her; and seeing this, she had consented to make tryst with him. At that very hour he should have been treading upon air to lift the latch of her garden gate, to breathe the sweet odors of spring around her, to own the world with her alone! And, instead, he was waiting here, face to face with grim sorrow, whiling away the leaden moments in constraint and solitude. Heaven! were all women made like these two, who had forsaken him in his first dark hour of need?

In those days a house of mourning was made more gruesome by the universal livery of woe assumed, outside and in. The gloomy officials who had charge of such matters looked in upon the desolate young man, asked for directions, and glided out again. Chloe, a very Niobe of tears, wept afresh every time

she approached her young master, and in the effort to restrain herself contorted her face so comically that once Laurie laughed aloud, making her believe he was following the example of his maternal ancestress darkly spoken of in the family as "deranged."

At last, in despair, he opened a chink of the heavy shutters at the west, letting in a last ray of light from the setting sun, and sought for a book on the little stand beside which his mother had been wont to sit. On this piece of furniture hung a ring of brass, and by pulling it Laurie had been used, as a little boy, to evoke the mystery of a certain sliding desk.

Mechanically he presently turned from his volume, of which he had not understood one word, to try at the desk as of old. He could almost hear his mother say, "Don't, Laurie!" in her clear, masterful tones. The desk glided into sight, revealing its well-worn upper surface covered with cotton velvet. Lifting this, he found the interior stocked with appurtenances for writing and a series of Eve's account-books, neatly kept.

In sheer weariness of spirit he opened one, then another, of these. They had all to do with recent expenditures in the household, and were accompanied by statements from his father's man of affairs, that the poor gentleman had not been allowed to see.

As Laurence read, the blood mounted to his face. For a long time, it would appear, their house had been tottering to its financial fall. The revenues of the family did not pretend to equal its necessary outlay. Who, then, had supplied deficiencies that should have been met by him?

In a flash came to him Mrs. Pips's hint about Eve's private needlework and the money supposed to be accruing to her account. He recalled the girl's constant application to odds and ends of fine stitchery, the nature of which he had not understood, but that he had often urged her to put down. For him and his she had stripped herself of hard earnings. To bar the wolf from the Queen Street door the brave little girl had lent all her strength. And none of the Hopes had, apparently, been the wiser. They had all used her, called her hither and thither, depended upon her; and, in the end, she had been chased like a disgraced menial from beneath their roof!

Laurence choked, and sprang to his feet. He could no longer endure the air of this room, borne down with familiar scents. It seemed to him to be redolent of ingratitude. For the first time in hours he crossed the threshold, passed the door behind which death's mystery was couched, and went down to the floor below.

Rarely, if he could help himself, had he entered these great, deserted rooms. The treasures of their bygone finery, so admired by his townspeople, were to him inexpressibly dreary and depressing. The holland bags in which the furniture was shrouded made whitish patches in the dusk. The wide parquettèd floor was a gleaming desert. But upon the cabinets and pier-tables of the chief saloon stood certain objects of value imported from the Old World in the palmy days of the family, and of these he now wished to assure himself. He knew they would find ready sale among the wealthy residents of the town, and his

intention was, from the proceeds of such sale, to settle a sum upon Eve which she should be made to look upon as a bequest from her late employers. That would be little enough in requital for her self-sacrifices. What a heart of gold was hers! He had been blind and foolhardy to turn aside from her to fix his fancy upon a spoiled coquette.

Through all his loyal desire to do Eve justice the longing for Lucilla had been struggling uppermost. He was cut to the heart that she still withheld from him even the smallest token of her regard.

As his wounded feelings found vent in this final bitter thought, Eve ran in through the rear door. She was bathed in tears, and her dress, muddy and disordered, showed that she had come in haste and afoot. But her face, illumined with love and sympathy, brought him a quick sense of renewed life and cheer.

"It is against my father's orders," she cried brokenly. "Oh, Laurie, did he suppose I could leave you alone—to-day?"

"Eve! my brave, true little heroine! It would need a lifetime to tell what I think of you. For I have found you out, dear. Your generosity has put me to keen shame—"

"What was it to do for them—for you?" she said, faltering. "Laurie, take it from your sister, who has come to mourn with you our dear ones. Oh! since we parted I have seen things in a new light. Your poor mother had right on her side, and all that has passed between you and me must be forgotten by us both. Go with me, and by her side I will renew

the vow made to my father never to think of marrying you."

Her voice failed through heartfelt sobbing. Laurence, waiting until he could venture to take her upstairs, stood beside her, gently stroking her bright hair.

While they remained together thus, the heavy mahogany door leading into the entrance-hall creaked inward on unused hinges, and from without floated to Laurence the soft accents of a voice that made his heart stand still.

"You will say that of course I do not expect your master to come down—that I called merely to inquire."

Directly Chloe appeared, ushering into the dusky room a vision so resplendent in youth and timorous beauty that the young man started away from Eve as if he had been shot—but not until the newcomer had taken in a full impression of the scene.

It was Lucilla, in hood and tippet, as she had just stepped from her chair outside! Lucilla, who, after her passionate denunciation of him to Arnold in the garden, had gone to her room and straightway lapsed into hot repentance for hasty judgment! Lucilla, who, yielding to an irresistible impulse, had come here, regardless of all else, to mourn with him in his sorrow!

Eve could not fathom the moment of freezing silence that ensued, but with a bow full of modest dignity she passed the stranger by and left them together.

"You do not speak?" cried Laurence, imploringly.

"Yet you could extend to me this act of womanly compassion in the stunning blow that kept me from seeking you to-day? Surely you don't regret it? Oh! if you knew how I have wearied for even a line in your handwriting to say that you feel my grief—"

"You see you were not disappointed," said Mrs. Warriner, holding her beautiful head high and speaking in a clear, metallic voice. "And now, perhaps you will be so good as to recall your servant and have me shown to my chair?"

"Lucilla!" exclaimed he, making two strides to where she stood with her hand upon the knob of the door, then pausing, remembering the dread presence in his home.

Lucilla did not exert herself to answer his mute appeal. With one look that spoke volumes, she turned and vanished.

V



It was not easy for her friends to understand why Mrs. Warriner, interrupting capriciously her career as a leader of fashionable life, should have shut up her Broadway house so early as the latter days of May, and set out, with her family and attendants, in a slow-sailing sloop for her manor on the Hudson.

That her name was down as patroness of several active charities, that she left many engagements unfulfilled, that her blooming health gave no excuse of illness, made her flitting the more mysterious. For a few days the matter was discussed,—in these times it would have been disposed of in a few hours,—then people began to declare that Lucilla had accepted her cousin, Captain Warriner, and the marriage would soon take place from the Manor, so that the captain might literally “come into his own.”

When Arnold was approached on the subject he did nothing to dissipate the impression, but, smiling, bowing, looking conscious, left all the world to believe that he was the proverbial happy man. Yet, strangely enough, as the weeks went on he did not leave New York. No doubt Mistress Lucilla was preparing some surprise. She was always original!

Of the two factions of admirers, one of whom had held up Warriner's banner, the other ranging itself under that of Laurence Hope, the Warriner champions were now triumphant. Their man, having behaved with excellent discretion, was clearly favored of the gods.

Hope, on the contrary, had passed under a cloud of adverse circumstance. Nobody thought of quoting him as a pet of fortune. Since the tragedy of his loss of both parents in a night, and after the daylight of disclosure had been let in upon their family affairs, a sad discovery had been made. To meet liabilities contracted by his parents, chiefly to pay the debts of his late spendthrift brother, it was found necessary to sell house, furniture, and other real estate, leaving Laurence almost penniless but for his army pay.

The world, not always ill-natured, was glad when a purchaser for the Queen Street mansion appeared in the person of a rich member of Congress anxious for installation in a desirable quarter near the East River. There had been no such activity in securing residences known since the war, and other sales were as good; but Laurence reaped little benefit; very nearly all of the proceeds went to his father's creditors.

However pitiful Captain Hope's condition, something stood between him and public sympathy. It was that ugly story concerning his affair with a handsome girl, an employee of his mother. No one denied 't was the shock of discovering their intrigue that had precipitated Madam Hope's demise. What mother of sons but could feel for the poor lady and turn a frown upon the offenders! And the conditions—so

repulsive! She hoodwinked, trusting both of them implicitly, and the thing carried on under her eyes, nay, in the very sick-room of the father. The hussy must be deep!

The story of the elopement, having gone through various phases, had settled down to this: The couple had been overhauled by a messenger on horseback, bearing the news of the captain's mother's death, when they had got no farther on their journey than Harlem Plains. They had returned before the minx had entrapped Laurence into marriage. What had become of her nobody knew or cared. Such schemers were a constant menace to the young men of good families. The least that could be done with Master Laurie was to send him, for a while, to Coventry.

Smarting under the odium of ill-natured lies, made to stand in a corner by society, ignored like one dead by the woman he loved, Laurence had violently wrenched himself as much as possible from contact with the world. Of the meager military establishment the new government had taken over from the late Confederation, General Knox, the Secretary of War, was his only official superior then present in New York; the Secretary had need of him for duty at headquarters, and thought it best to let his fit of spleen work itself quietly out. Though in the offices of the War Department they smiled at his passionately expressed wish for active service in the field to remove him from the sphere of slander, for a chance to warm his blood anew in an honest fight, the impulse was understood by the veterans who had recently laid aside their arms in hard-earned peace.

Even President Washington, by whom most things concerning his old followers were observed, smiled gravely when, addressing Captain Hope one day in public, he bade him remember there was harder work for the Sons of Liberty in maintaining what they had won than in striking for it with their swords.

The sound of his chief's voice in kindly admonition made the fire leap into Hope's eyes, his face flush, every muscle of his body stiffen with new resolve. Not trusting himself to speak, he bowed his acknowledgment.

After that there was no more moping. The perilous illness of the President, occurring at this time, inspired all classes with anxiety, and knit in a common bond many hearts previously driven asunder by political dispute. Hope despised himself for his late selfish indulgence in despondency. What could he—what would not he—do now to prove himself worthy the injunction of his peerless commander, now lying so near to death?

He threw himself into present occupation with zeal so marked that the report of it was carried to the President in his convalescence. Shortly afterward Hope's heart was made glad by receiving orders to go on an extended journey on horseback through the Eastern States to visit certain military posts still in possession of the British, about which the President was known to feel concern, and to report his observations to the government.

It was a mission requiring sound knowledge of his profession, as well as diplomatic skill. His choice by highest authority for the task was equivalent to a

public declaration of his deserts. When he presented himself at the President's levee to take final leave, before setting out on the expedition, Laurence met no more averted looks. All eyes beamed on him approvingly. The most important members of the government had kind words of farewell for him, and by his contemporaries in service in the now disbanded Continental Army he was congratulated in envying terms.

One voice in the choir was silent. Arnold Warriner turned on him darkling looks, and, at a men's supper given on the eve of Hope's departure, got up pointedly and left the table when Hope sat down to it. The intention of insult was unmistakable; but Hope, by the advice of his friends, decided not to take notice of it. The next day he was to set out to be absent for several months in the special service of the Chief. That duty should be paramount; his own quarrels could wait.

For some time before this outburst Arnold Warriner had felt with stinging certainty that Lucilla had slipped between his hands. He had made sure in the beginning that after a brief time in which to get over her pique with Hope she would recall him to resume his rôle of cousinly consoler, from which post it would be but a step to divert her affections to himself. So convinced, he had fervently indorsed her resolution to go out of town; but his very first offer of himself as a guest at the Manor had been met by an excuse and a delay.

Arnold could understand a high-spirited woman feeling shy about again meeting one who had been witness to her despairing tears over another man's

desertion; but as weeks passed into months, and he was still kept at bay, he lost patience, objurgating Lucilla, her mother, and Hope in terms hardly flattering. In an access of disappointment and wounded vanity, he had even addressed to her a letter hinting that she should have more womanly pride than to remain inconsolable about Hope. To this Lucilla deftly answered that if indeed she had tried to think forgivingly of the offender, it was in deference to Arnold's advice, and she should ever thank him for his recommendation to Christian charity. Whereupon Warriner, remembering how he had blown cold, then hot, in the widow's garden, again devoted Lucilla and her swain to all evil.

If he could only be sure about the state of affairs between them! Hope's exoneration from the charge brought against him to Lucilla was now known by his best friends to be complete. Already the world was beginning to accept it. Had not Lucilla, ascertaining this, offered Hope a renewal of her friendship? And was not Arnold held responsible for the slander? How else could he interpret the sarcasm of her letter? In Arnold's eyes, women had no business to be sarcastic, or investigating, or anything but loving recipients of the dicta of mankind. Lucilla had evidently recovered ground to some extent; and Hope's return to cheerful looks and vigorous work was in the highest degree suggestive. Oh! if it were true that fellow had—

Arnold stopped short at the reflection of his own face in his mirror, before which he was dressing. It was well Lucilla had never seen those handsome features so disturbed by black rage.

It was more than a sentimental fury that possessed him. Since the spring, events had transformed the fainéant ex-captain into a desperately anxious man. His passion for high play, fostered by a complaisant age, had brought him to the brink of dishonorable ruin. Unless he could soon lay hands upon fortune through Lucilla—this incident, this intruder into the Warriner family, who had stepped before him by a whim of fate—his crash was soon to come.

Lucilla must be his. And the only obstacle was Laurence Hope!

Thus matters stood when Captain Hope was announced at headquarters to have come in for that most coveted designation for special employment by the President's own selection. Then Arnold's smoldering fire had leaped into flame.

What was this but the effort of influential friends to rehabilitate his rival before the public gaze? After it, Hope might pretend to anything. Under the influence of the galling thought, he had tried to insult Laurence before the assembled supper-party. Feeling sure it had been perceived, Hope's failure to notice him in return filled his soul with frenzy. Quitting the house to wander out into the night, he carried prisoned in his breast a demon that gave him no rest from its vengeful promptings.

EVE, sitting alone on the door-stone of her father's cottage, listened drearily to the voices of the night. Job had gone into town to deliver a piece of completed work, but at parting had addressed to her no expression of hope that she would not mind her soli-

tude. Words between them were few in these days of her new life.

It was broad moonlight of September, and she could see the river shining. With a companion with whom she could interchange congenial thoughts, the scene and hour would have been a luxury. But Eve was dull and still. She was thinking of days forever gone, of joys snatched from her.

She sometimes wondered if it could be true she was ever so blended with the Hopes that her thoughts and feelings were their own; that she had ever believed Laurie could be her husband. It had been so long since she had done anything but bend her head like a reed before the storm!

Eve's had been a sad trial. The scandal that had slipped like a mantle from the man had overwhelmed the woman.

The first intimation coming to Job that idle tongues were busy with the good name of his child was a visit from an elder of his church. The story, in detail, of Eve's alleged offense was then laid before him, and Eve summoned to meet an investigation behind closed doors. Either she must satisfy the church of her innocence or retire from its membership. This was to wound Job Watson in his tenderest sensibility—allegiance to the religion handed down to him by his fathers. In his rage and shame, he refused to give her a personal hearing.

The incidents of her abrupt return home, her confession of dismissal from service, her disobedience in leaving him to go back to the house of death, arose as confirmation of her guilt. Laurence Hope's manly

letter exculpating the girl from any suspicion of offense leading to her discharge became a piece of specious insolence. How much more so the seemingly considerable sum of money sent as "wages due" from her late employer! Job, who had at first laid this away in his strong box with some relaxation of feeling toward the Hopes, now took it out with a dark flush upon his cheek. He would not delay a moment in sending it back, with a message of fierce and bitter rejection, to the agent through whom Hope had preferred to act. And then, with lamentations for the disgrace that had come upon his house, Job led his child before the judges who were to decide her fate.

Eve's heart bled for her father as he stood beside her throughout the ordeal. She had never seen his head bowed like this, when it was a question of banishing his child from the fold that had been the refuge of his forebears for long generations. The presence of Mrs. Pips—an affectionate if confused witness—and of a few grave elders Eve had looked up to from childhood gave her courage to speak in her own defense. All she could do was to tell her simple story of the facts. When she had finished, an aged leader came forward and held out his hand to her.

"You have made a plain statement, my child," he said, tears starting to his eyes; "and I'll venture to say there's not one of us few who have met here to pass on you to-day but what feels you have spoken truth. But we must confer together, and God grant all the rest are of my mind."

Then only did Eve cast herself in a passion of weeping into her father's unwilling arms.

In the end, with much deliberation, and after convicting her of the less serious offense of having been present at a performance of public theatricals the year before, Eve was exonerated from the graver charge. Following certain discipline, she was to be reëstablished in her old place in the church.

The shame of the ordeal had fallen like a lash upon her father's spirit. She felt it would be to him a lifelong humiliation, and the sight of her in his house a continual offense.

Their days together, after this, were intolerably strained. For a time Eve went about her household tasks in dumb endurance of her lot. Now and again the thought of what she had lost in renouncing Laurie's love swept over her like a flood, and she felt she must see him and speak to him, or die. But for the most part she was heroically calm.

Once the idea came to her to relieve her father of her presence by taking a room in the town and getting work on her own account. With a feeling of new life at the prospect, she went to consult Mrs. Pips, who received her with effusive welcome. But at the first disclosure of the girl's ambitions the good woman mournfully told her the scheme had objections she had not thought of.

"Oh, my dear ! it goes against me to give you pain—I that well knows what trouble is," said the dame. "It is n't that I 'd fear to take you in, and charge you as little for it, too, as anybody in the street, for my spare room is empty now. And I don't doubt the gentry 'u'd come back to you in time. There ain't many hands at a needle like you, and they know it.

But no matter what your church said, there 'll be people to be always casting what was charged against you like mud on your skirts as you walk by. If you leave your father now they 'll be gospel sure you 're in the wrong. It's only sticking by him till the thing's forgotten that 'll help you in the least."

"I think nothing can help me," said Eve, in a low, distressful tone, as she turned to walk away. When she had gone some distance, she came back and cried in the old woman's bosom, and was cried over in return.

After that it was again silent suffering, until her loneliness grew almost more than she could bear. In her desperate isolation she often thought of Luke Adamson. So long had he stayed away that she was conscious of a sickening fear lest he belonged to the body of those still unconvinced of her rectitude. It seemed natural that he, more than another, should feel the sting of these charges against the woman everybody knew he had long hoped to win. If he would only give her a chance to set him right!

But Luke had not appeared; and Job, little gifted with tact, had outspokenly told Eve the lad knew better than to have people say he was still hanging on to a girl that had been disgraced before the church.

At the moment when, sitting under the moonbeams, her thoughts had again reverted to her humble lover, Eve was startled by the figure of a man with his hand upon the garden gate. Her throb of despairing hope that it might be Laurie was dashed away by the approach of Luke Adamson.

"I met your father carrying back Judge Chater's *escritoire*," he said, after bidding her a shy good evening and sitting down at the other end of the step, "so I knew you would be alone. Do you like *heliotrope*?—a gardener gave me this."

"I love it!" cried Eve, receiving the large cluster he held out, and burying her face in its luscious blossoms. "We have only common flowers as yet, but next year, if my father is willing, I mean to have a fine border."

"Are n't there some things that would bloom this autumn that we could set out now?" he asked, relieved by her acceptance of his token. "I know that gardener well. He is the Scot who laid out those famous beds in that grand house in 'Broadway—the ones everybody stops to look at through the railings—they call it Widow Warriner's."

"Oh! I don't want them," interrupted Eve, letting fall her *heliotrope* into her lap and sitting upright in a sort of defiant pose.

Poor Luke could not know that the name he had mentioned brought back the most poignant of all Eve's sufferings—her first glimpse of the splendid *Lucilla* in the Hopes' drawing-room, and her instant conviction that this was Laurie's love.

"No offense meant," said the young man, after an awkward silence.

"Please, Luke, don't mind me if I seem fretful and nervous. I see so few people that I'm forgetting how to behave. Indeed, when you came I'd just been thinking of you and wishing for the hundredth time that you'd take it into your head to come and see

an old friend, who, though appearances are against her, has never done anything to forfeit your good opinion."

"As if I 'd ever thought so!" he cried. "Eve, I've been just hungering to come, but your father told me my visits would not be welcome. And I could feel myself that the sight of a man who loved you would be always reminding you of him you 'd lost. If I'd had the right to be by your side, do you think I'd have left you alone through such trials? Eve, lassie, I sometimes think girls like you can't picture to themselves what they rouse in a man's heart. If you did, you 'd not be fancying I could stay away, unless it was because I loved you better than I love myself. But this is n't what I came for—"

"You believed in me from the first?" she interrupted, soothed by the delicious sense that here, at last, was one who had felt her sorrows as his own.

"Never for one minute did I doubt you. If I had, I 'd ha' killed him, instead of calling him my friend."

"Him—you have seen Captain Hope?" she asked eagerly.

"All summer he and I have been meeting and talking about you, and plotting to help you. But in this sort of case a young man is worse than nothing, Eve, and we had both the sense to know that, to serve you, we must keep away from you."

"I suppose so," she said, sighing. "But ah! what heartaches it would have saved me to feel that he—that you—" She stopped, confused.

"Eve, he came to me first because you had told him I was to be trusted. And you will trust me now, when

I tell you the thought that's in your mind must not be allowed to stay there. Captain Hope has no idea of coming back to you, my dear. He has put you out of his mind for always, except as a brave, true girl who has suffered through his fault. He would give anything in the world to undo what has been done. But he can't, and I can't. Nothing can, but time. Some day he hopes to meet you again, but not now."

He paused for a moment, but Eve did not answer. Then, catching his breath, the man went on again:

"You were not the only sufferer, Eve. The captain, too, had sore trials coming out of your affairs. It is only just now that he's beginning to look and act like himself again. Now, dear, let me tell you what he's made me do for you—take into my charge that money coming to you from the Hope estate, that he says is yours by right. He can't touch it, if you won't; and so I've promised to hold it, subject to your claim. He's been urging this on me a long time, but I held back, and to-day he has persuaded me to do it, and to come here and tell you, without putting it off another day. He thinks you need me, Eve, and God grant he's right!"

"I do need you, Luke. My heart would have broken soon if some one had not come," she said, swallowing a sob.

It was a critical moment for Luke, who was yearning to clasp her to his heart and carry her away into his home forever. But he had gone there determined to be impersonal, and would not yield.

"The captain gave me a message for you, Eve. He said I was to beg you, for his sake, to call on *me* when-

ever anything or anybody makes life hard for you. He wanted to be sure there 'll be some one to stand by you through thick and thin."

"He is—what is he going to do?" she asked, her heart beating quick.

"That 's my news, Eve. I 'm afraid it may give you pain, but it 's the best thing that could happen to the captain. He 's going away on a long journey of three or four months. It 's a great chance for him, and he 's rare proud of it, I tell you."

"Going away!" Eve repeated blankly. Nothing that Luke could do or say could alter the force of that. All these sad months of separation she had been at least able to think of him as near her, and to know that he was well.

"Yes; 't was n't fit for him to be moping on here, and you and I must be glad for him, Eve. He asked me to say good-by for him, and to tell you that, whatever comes, he 'll always be your loyal and devoted friend. I wish I could speak like the captain, Eve, but I can't. I 'm only a plain workingman, without education, down at the bottom of the ladder, while he 's at the top. If the time ever comes when I or mine could befriend him, I'd be glad to do it, for he 's given me the chance of my life. I 've kept this for the last, Eve! He 's got me the contract to build a big warehouse that 's going up on some city lots, once belonging to the Hopes, that were bought in by a friend of his father's. And if our town goes on spreading over this island, as it 's like to do, and I give satisfaction as a master builder, there 'll be more work of the kind to follow. I 'm to go to-morrow and

sign the papers. How's that for a beginning, Eve? No job-work after this, if I succeed!"

"Dear Luke, you deserve the best always," she said, "and I am thankful that you've found such a friend."

"It is you that found him for me in the beginning, Eve; and I won't say that I did n't at first mistrust him mightily. But he's a man, every inch of him, and if your father were to ask me, I'd say so to his face. But as long as water runs to the sea you'd never get Job Watson to think any better of such as Captain Hope as a husband for you than the captain's people thought of you as a wife for him. Don't shrink from me, Eve. I'm not going to hurt you any more. I had to say this to make all straight between us."

"You don't hurt me; but wait a minute!" she said feverishly. Luke was silent, and together they thus remained for a long time. Then she began to speak to him of things irrelevant.

When Eve lay down to rest that night she was, despite the touch upon her sorest spot, happier than for weeks past. The knowledge that Laurence had been watching over her, though from afar, blended with the comfort of Luke's tender if homely words. Poor Luke! He had done her more good than anybody, even if he could not fill the void in her breast! The world was not all desolate, now that she had tasted some of the love and sympathy her nature craved.

WHILE these things are going on in town, we may hark back to the beginning of Mistress Lucilla's ex-

perience as a world-renouncing celibate amid the forests around her beautiful home on the Hudson.

After about a week of it her spirits flagged, her tasks lacked interest. Neither books, work, exercise on the pianoforte, nor visits to the poor on her estate gave her comfort. Still-room, dairy, poultry-yard, stables—all palled on her fancy. Forever and ever she was thinking how she hated Laurence Hope.

With her cousin Arnold's disclosure still rankling in her mind, after her first burst of jealous anger against Hope, in which she had declared she would never look upon his face again, had she not mercifully and graciously reconsidered that determination? Had not she on the spur of the moment ordered her chairmen to carry her across to the Hopes' house, determining to give her lover the most generous proof of her continuing trust in him? And once there, what spectacle had met her gaze? Laurence standing as close as he could get beside that little red-haired person, bending over her with every expression of affectionate solicitude, and—oh, horrors!—stroking her hair!

It would be of no possible use for him to try to get over that. Let him marry whom he would! Mrs. Warriner wanted nothing of a man who could stroke another woman's hair—red hair!—flaming!

All her sweetness was turned to gall by this disclosure; she returned home and resigned herself never to think of happiness again. When a letter in Hope's handwriting had come to her one evening, she had pounced upon it, and then by an exercise of heroic

fortitude had locked it up unread. Two days later another missive came. Mrs. Warriner, finally inclosing both of them unopened in a sheet of paper, sealed twice with her husband's seal displaying the Warriner coat of arms, sent them back to the writer. The next day she left town. After that she had heard from him no more.

Later in the summer a letter from Miss Polly Clinton had given her the information that people were coming round to think better of that scandal about Laurence Hope. In Polly's next letter Hope's justification was set forth at greater length; and the third carried with it this balm for Lucilla's heart: "Captain Hope has not set eyes on Eve Watson since his parents' funeral." With this Lucilla was obliged to be content; but she held Arnold accountable for much of her trouble, and treated him accordingly.

In this frame of mind, dewy June, hot July, and sultry August had passed over the lady of the Manor. September, well past its middle, having given up its struggle to be reckoned among the summer months, was coming out bravely as a beauty in decline.

The hills on either side of the river, that here widened into a glassy lake specked with the sails of laggard craft, were beginning to be touched with purple and orange and crimson; apples were dropping in her orchards; the flight of ducks southward had begun; Lucilla's wood walks were enlivened by the noise of full-grown coveys under command of Bob White, the squirrel's fussy note, and the loud tapping of woodpeckers. And in the general stir of nature toward provision against the chill future, Mrs. War-

riner began to realize that she was tired of living by herself.

Madam Chester, who had her own reasons for satisfaction with the situation, noticed the symptoms of her daughter's state, and took alarm. She had enjoyed a good long rest from her prevalent anxiety. In town, every breeze that blew threatened a husband who might send his mother-in-law into banishment. What a relief to pass the days without having Arnold Warriner marching up to the front door, or seeing Laurence Hope's *chapeau bras* lying upon the table! No one could imagine the strain it had been, not to know when the former might come to a halt for good inside of Lucilla's front door, or the hat be hung up with an expression of proprietary right in the hall!

Lucilla had not realized her talent as a dissembler until she found her mother in ignorance of her real feeling toward these two. She sometimes amused herself by playing upon the good lady's fears.

"I have been thinking, mama, that it would be a polite attention to invite Betsy Crewe to pass a week or two with us. And there is poor Polly Clinton, who needs a change, since she has just been nursing her mother in bilious fever. They can come by the stage-coach to the *Green Man*, whence the chariot and I will fetch them."

"Would not such gay creatures feel imposed upon by the dullness of our seclusion?" replied the dowager, snuffing the wind. "Might they not be expecting the society of beaus?"

"Even so," answered Lucilla, smiling. "I fancy we could render ourselves endurable to one or two

gentlemen of my acquaintance should I bid them to the Manor."

"Any one but that designing Captain Warriner," cried her mother, unmasking boldly. "I'll vow, Lucilla, I can't promise to treat him with common civility. And I fear me Captain Hope is not much better."

"I think neither one of those you mention will be likely to come here now," answered Mrs. Warriner, with sudden gravity. "On the whole, we will leave Adam out of our Eden, and have the girls alone."

WHEN Mrs. Warriner's traveling-chaise, drawn by four fine, mouse-colored steeds all a-sweat, pulled up before the door of the roadside hostelry known as the *Green Man*, where it was the custom of the stage-coach from New York to stop to feed passengers and change horses, the lady inside spied waiting for her on the porch two roseate faces, enframed in large calashes of green silk.

These were none other than her expected guests from town, who, through the mischance of one of her horses casting a shoe, had been kept waiting at the tavern some time after the conveyance that brought them had jogged northward.

A painter in genre might have found excuse for lingering upon the scene. The little inn, nestling under the shoulder of a high hill, was surrounded by an old-world garden where sunflowers and snapdragons blended with asparagus and onions. At the back were stables and coach-houses, in size, like the sign-board, out of all proportion with the tiny place. In the middle distance a group of country people and children stood gaping at the unwonted presence of

lady visitors in greatcoats of dove-gray lined with rose-color, carrying in their hands flowered band-boxes, and surrounded by stylish portmanteaus. And before the steps stood a vehicle known and admired over the whole countryside, while a footman was just letting down the steps to allow the exit of the lady of Warriner Manor. When Lucilla was seen to submerge herself successively in the embraces of her Betsy and her Polly, there was a general feeling among the assemblage that, the height of spectacular effect having been attained, they might as well be preparing to go home.

What, therefore, was their astonishment when, on the receipt of information from one of the new-comers, supplemented by a breathless announcement from the other, interrupted by the first speaker, and then chorused by both, Mrs. Warriner was seen to totter and grow pale, and sink again into the arms of her friends. The landlord, who brought her a glass of water and received the usual assurance that she was "better now," finally helped to put the three ladies into the chaise. After, with much pomp of footmen and postilion, the vehicle had rolled away, the spectators flocked forward to know what had occurred.

Landlord Nixon, a satisfactory neighbor in that he never tantalized by holding back news too long, was prompt to relieve anxiety. There had been a duel down York way—of which the coach had previously brought details—between two young sprigs of the gentry, fighting for heaven knows what. A Captain Hope, the challenged party, had been badly wounded by madam's cousin, Captain Arnold Warriner, and was not expected to survive.

VI

“ O one need say a word to me, mama!” cried Lucilla, stamping her foot passionately. “I am going to town to look after him, and there’s an end of it. I have given my orders to my people, and nothing on earth shall stop me. If I could take him to my house and give him everything it contains, I’d do so. You don’t know how mean and base I’ve been to him—to send back all of his dear letters unread; and oh, how I wish I had them now!

“When I say unread, I will tell you the truth, mama. I peeped into one of them, and it said he is mine till death. Mine till death, and I not go to him now? If I had n’t been hard as a flint, and so jealous I could n’t think, I’d have taken his word then. Polly says he has never been near that girl since, and that everybody knows it. He has behaved so beautifully since he has been in trouble that even the President has praised and commended him. To think I was the only one to hold back, and now—oh, it is too cruel! I meant to bring him back to me just as soon as we could get into town, when there’d be some excuse for it. Mama, you must speak! You must say

you are sorry for me, or I 'll never confide in you again. Don't you see that my heart is breaking?"

"If you will cease speaking yourself long enough to give me a chance, Lucilla," said Madam Chester, dark with disapprobation, "I should be glad, at least, to ask how you know this scandalous duel was on your account?"

"Polly says the town is full of it. Arnold had failed once to provoke him into a quarrel, and again that same night repeated the insult in such a way that Captain Hope could not avoid taking the matter up. They met at daybreak the next morning—the day *he* was to have set off on the journey that promised him such honor and credit. He purposely avoided aiming at Arnold, who in return shot him.

"Oh, the monster! the murderer! Mama, he won't die—you don't think he 'll die till I get there? See, I am doing my best to be brave and strong and worthy of him. If he only had known I love him—if I can but tell him so once—I 'll be satisfied. I believe the girls don't suspect me. No one but you knows that if he dies I 'll never smile again. They think I am going to town to make what amends I can for Arnold's dastardly act. But you know, mama—you know, you know!"

"Lucilla, my child, calm yourself. Your eyes are wild, and your face is dreadfully flushed. Don't you think 't would be better to lie down? My duty as a parent, however little exercised, cannot be put aside, and in your present condition I should consider it not only an impropriety, but madness, for you to go to town."

"Madness be it, then!" cried Mrs. Warriner. "I have made all my preparations. I take with me Myrtilla, and Peter on the box with the coachman. Both of them are entirely to be trusted, and will suffice to protect me in an emergency. See, there comes the chariot to the door. I am sorry to take issue with you on a question of propriety, but of this I must be judge. And if my blood is hot, there 'll be time a-plenty for it to cool before we get there. Good-by, mama; and be sure I shall ask for no more of your sympathy."

Sweeping a courtesy to the angry dowager, she dashed out of the room. Myrtilla, waiting in the entry, perilously near to the keyhole, was swept along by her mistress's impetuous movement.

Betsy and Polly, perched like caryatids one on either side the front door, received Lucilla's farewells with differing emotions. Poor little Polly, who had long ago renounced her nascent admiration of Laurence in the widow's favor, whispered in her friend's ear something that made Lucilla turn and kiss her once again before she hurried off.

After the departure, Miss Crewe, in the general denunciation of Arnold Warriner, kept her opinion to herself. She was afraid to advance her poor little theory that perhaps Captain Warriner had received provocation of which no one was aware. Madam Chester, to rid herself of feelings implanted by her daughter's rebellious action, chose frequently to turn the conversation to the crime, previous shortcomings, and certain doom of the next heir to the Manor.

Two days of this sort of thing were endured by

Miss Betsy in subjugated silence. On the third, during a forecast of Arnold's variety of punishment in the event of Hope's death, she ran out of the room. Reappearing with red eyes and a distressed aspect, she offered to read aloud to the other ladies from "The Belle's Stratagem," which they were just then enjoying together; then, in the middle of the reading, broke down in a passion of sobs and again disappeared.

Miss Polly, a gentle little soul, sped after her comrade, and, without alluding to its cause, employed every soothing art to banish her Betsy's grief. From that hour she displayed also much finesse in always turning the chat from Captain Warriner's offense to Bowen's waxworks, the prospect of a review and sham fight by the companies of militia the town could boast, the theater in John Street, the high price of house-rent (her papa having been asked to pay forty pounds a year for a moderate dwelling, with stable), the hair-dressers' getting up to charge twenty shillings a month, the excellence of M. Singeron's marchpane and gilt gingerbread, whether Miss Champion's color was her own, and the birth of Mrs. Johnson's twins.

We who are privileged to read Miss Betsy's thoughts may know that day and night she dwelt on the image of the captain, who had won her heart, vowing to herself that if the whole world went against him she would not.

The last stretch of the road was, as usual, the longest. Lucilla, who had come post, traveling day and night, and paving her way with gold to secure the

best horses at every stage, was at close of day but just passing into the scattered village of Harlem, when her chariot, that had been dragging slower and slower, came to a full stop.

"What is the matter?" she cried impulsively, letting down the glass to put her head out at the window.

A dismal evening! After a day of hard rain a fog had crept up from the water to submerge the travelers, and the footman, appearing from under its gray curtain to answer his lady's call, exuded moisture at every pore.

"Light the lamps, will you?" she went on. "I can see nothing. And, pray, why have we stopped?"

"It 's the beasts, mistis. They won't budge another step," said the black man patiently, while proceeding to take out of his pocket a tinder-box, and by the help of flint and steel to cast a faint illumination from the lamps into the surrounding gloom.

"Don't be so stupid, Peter, or I 'll sell you to some one who will teach you better sense. How dare you pretend these horses have broken down? Tell John Coachman I 'll sell him, too, if he does n't make them go on."

Peter, grinning at a time-worn threat among her pampered slaves, answered his mistress serenely:

"Ain't no use telling Coachman, mistis; it 's jes a fac', the leaders are dead beat, an' the wheelers most as bad. We 've come at a mighty pace, mistis, an' de mud 's been nigh to the hubs in spots. If mistis 'u'd give the order to stop at Marse Tom Clapp's tavern, a little piece beyond here, we might be so lucky as to

get fresh hosses—that is, if mistis *must* go on to-night.”

“Clapp’s Tavern? We are near there?” cried Lucilla.

“Yes, mistis; jes a little piece further on.”

The resignation in Peter’s manner did not deeeive his mistress. Nor did the hypocritical ealm of her maid, Myrtila, who, gaping and weary, now roused herself from her nap in the cushions opposite to listen to the conversation. Mrs. Warriner well knew that all three of her present body-guard were acquainted with the merits of the famous road-house, whither the pleasure-seekers of Gotham were in the habit of driving out for oyster suppers, turtle feasts, and dances at all seasons of the year. More than once had Mrs. Warriner’s attendants tasted the quality of its good cheer. “I don’t believe a word you say about the horses!” she exclaimed, thoroughly annoyed. “You are a pack of good-for-naughts, who think of nothing but your suppers.”

“Supper ’d be might’ good now, mistis,” replied the stolid Peter; “an’ if mistis don’ trus’ me ’bout the hosses, she ’s on’y got to git down an’ look at ’em herself.”

Descending to the muddy ground, Lucilla followed Peter’s lantern to the front, to find it as he had said. With drooped heads and tails quivering, mired to the middle, a reek of steam arising from their sides, the poor brutes gave plain evidenece of their exhausted state. It scemed doubtful that they could pull on as far as Clapp’s.

But amid shouts and adjurations from the men,

and much cracking of the whip, the heavy chariot again lumbered forward, shortly coming to a halt before a long, low building, whose lights shone cheerful to the sight.

Great was Tom's astonishment and deference when he found what an important passenger the chariot contained. He conducted Madam Warriner through the ordinary, with its pleasant aspect of every day, into the great, bare ball-room, where a fire of logs was ordered to be kindled on the hearth, then stood before her, his apron swelling with a sense of the honor done his house. To her demand for horses he demurred mournfully; to that for supper for her attendants as joyfully assented.

"Indeed, ma'am, the best the house affords is at your orders; and I can back my cook to serve you a dish of broiled oysters and a roast partridge that would give satisfaction to any of the quality. Would you be pleased to have tea, ma'am, or port-wine negus, or a leetle drop of punch—Tom Clapp's punch—with a whiff of cognac, a dash of old Jamaica, a squeeze of lime-juice, and a slice of Seville orange? Not forgetting the water, though you must have had your full share of that to-day, ma'am. Ho! ho! ho!"

"I said supper for my servants," interrupted the lady, sharply. "The quicker the better. But horses—horses before all. Surely you must have a pair that will take me on to-night."

"Nothing in the stables at present, I'm ashamed to say, ma'am. It sha'n't happen again, Madam Warriner. There 's just a chance neighbor Simmons may n't have had his nags out to-day. It's a matter

of half a mile over to Simmons's, and I 'll send Ostler straightway. Meanwhile you won't refuse my cook the honor of preparing a bite for you, ma'am?"

"Go quickly—send quickly—bring me some horses quickly, and you may prepare anything you please," said the lady, pacing impatiently back and forth. "But stay, landlord—don't hurry off so. You must have later news than I. Has anything been heard about the condition of—of the gentleman whom my kinsman, Captain Warriner, was so unfortunate as to wound in an affair of honor recently?"

"Surely, ma'am!" exclaimed Clapp, a light of intelligence breaking upon his puzzled face. "'T would be only natural for you to feel mortal anxious on that score. Such a fine, noble gentleman as Captain Warriner is—so free with his money—many 's the treat he 's paid for in these rooms—and no doubt there was trouble behind it we know naught about. They do say—"

"For heaven's sake, answer my question, and spare me what they say! Is Captain Hope recovering?"

"Captain Hope was alive at last accounts, ma'am, but very low. A party in Italian chaises drove out yesterday for a partridge supper, and, if you 'll believe me, ma'am, they brought Billy, the German fiddler, and his goblin wife, tucked away in one of the vehicles. Such a bow as Billy handled yesterday! It's never been beat under my roof. The little dwarf outdid himself. They do say, Madam Warriner, that Billy was taught his music by the great Mozart himself. And the dancing—such pigeonwings and chassés! Lord, ma'am, you're looking ill! Shall I

call your black wench for you—or my wife 'u'd be proud to wait on you herself—”

“You said Captain Hope was—very—low?” she repeated in a terrified whisper.

“So one of the gentlemen said to the other in my hearing, ma'am. They 've got him in a poor enough house—a joiner's in Sweetbrier Lane, near where they fought; but he 's the best medical skill in the city, and friends are with him, and the gentry are flocking to ask for him all day long. Nobody thinks of aught but Captain Hope's grave situation. That 's not to say Captain Warriner has no friends, Madam Warriner. Just at present he 's keeping out of the way, and nobody knows his whereabouts. But, depend on it, he 'll get off scot-free. Everybody makes allowance for the hot blood of these buckish young dandies. I would n't take it so to heart, ma'am; that I would n't. There, her color 's coming back, Lord be praised! Shall I send the women now?”

“Send no one but your man to fetch the horses. Pay any price, and the sooner you get them here the better you, too, shall be paid. Go!”

Boniface, eager to communicate some of his varied emotions to curious souls in the coffee-room, ran off at a dog-trot, and Lucilla dropped into a chair before the fire, which had now blazed up smartly, and was diffusing its ruddy glare over the whole room.

“‘Still living, but very low.’ Great heavens, what might not have happened since this was said yesterday? Friends were caring for him! Who could have claimed this precious privilege?”

If he could only know that she loved him, that the

going out of his young life would plunge hers into darkness! If she might ~~only~~ kneel at his side, win from his dying eyes one look of recognition, press a last kiss upon his lips!

No matter who looked on, she should not fear to reveal what he was to her. The world with its thousand tongues, its hydra-headed gossip, was nothing. Only to let him *know*!

Perhaps—and a shiver ran through her—he was past knowing anything; it might be he was already—Oh! not that, not that! In her anguish she sprang upon her feet and looked about her, trying to shake off the ghastly fear. The large, empty room with the narrow mirrors and hunting prints in black frames divided by oil-lamps set in sockets around the walls, the prim benches covered with red moreen, the musicians' dais at one end, the dark floor polished by the feet of many dancers—how they brought back the day last winter, soon after her first meeting with Laurence Hope, when they had been together here!

It was a great sleighing-party that came out from town to find Tom Clapp's tavern warmed from the core by mighty fires, and decked with garlands of spruce and holly. Every one was keyed to hilarity by the drive in crisp air, through a white world, under a sky of dazzling blue.

Could it be she, Lucilla,—this woe-worn creature,—who had then led down the middle of the reel with Laurence Hope?

She saw herself all in white like the heart of a Lamarek rose, a coif bordered with swan's-down

upon her proud young head, a laugh upon her lips that seemed fixed there for all time.

When the dance was proposed, her cousin and Hope had started together across the room to secure her as a partner. Hope had reached her first, and Arnold had fallen back in vexation. On the way in to town she had accorded to Hope the place beside her occupied in going out by Arnold. Her cousin had taken offense, and had not come near her for a week. That was the beginning of their rivalry.

Pure coquetry possessed her then. Not a thought beyond the hour, and the pride of absorbing the two handsomest men of the party. After that day Laurence had piqued her by seeming to draw back. She had tried to make him feel her power; and then without warning she had felt his power. "Her mind was crowned with him."

Oh! to think of his activity laid low; the heart she had made to quicken by a look or word ceasing to beat; the hand that had clasped hers warmly growing chill. And all for her! She could not deceive herself on this point. Arnold's letters had shown her his growing wrath and jealousy of Hope. The dark mystery was why fate had brought the three of them together in this room, only to work out such results.

Lucilla could not eat the food they brought to her. She drank tea and crumbled bread, chafing at the delay.

The lapse of what, in those old unhurried days, was really a short time for securing and harnessing new horses, seemed to her an eternity.

Through the night, onward! The mist from the

river deepened until all save a few yards on either side and ahead of the chariot-lamps was swathed in gray. The men on the box, recognizing the spirit that impelled them from within, and warmed by tankards of Tom's ale after a liberal supper, urged the horses to their best speed, never heeding what might be in the way. Up hill, down dale, the coach rocked, plunging through mire and water, and taking stones with absolute impartiality.

Past mansion and cottage locked in the silence of the fog, along the highroad from Boston, over the Kissing Bridge at Old Wreck Brook, past the poor-house, the negro burying-ground, the pot-bakers, tanyard, ropewalk, and Jews' graveyard. John Coachman did not permit himself a word to his colleague till, with a grunt of satisfaction, he drew up at last before the *Dog and Duck* tavern, at the beginning of the Bowery.

"We's alive, Peter," was then his utterance.

The landlord of the *Dog and Duck*, bustling out to the rencounter of customers on this dripping evening, was, as it happened, an ex-soldier of Hope's war regiment. Lucilla, knowing this fact from Hope himself, had ordered a stop there, in the belief she would receive definite news from the invalid.

"No worse, thank God, but not to say better; his life hanging on a thread," answered the man, saluting to the inquiries from a lovely ghost who hung out of the coach window, looking as if she would devour him with her eyes. "'T was to one Adamson's, a joiner, they took him first, and there he lies still, poor gentleman. 'T is in Sweetbrier Lane, madam, a little

distance from the old City Hospital, behind which they fought in an orchard so overgrown 't was a hiding-place none suspected. If the captain dies the world and the service will be the losers, for a braver, nobler young officer I never served under—though he but a lad then, and I with gray hairs coming at the time."

"Oh, thank you, my good man!" she cried fervently, putting a shining object in his hand. "You are very good, and I think you keep the nicest tavern on this road. To Sweetbrier Lane, Peter; and tell Coachman to try if he cannot drive a *little* fast."

The gold in his palm, from which he turned to stare after the departing chariot, convinced Corporal Stubbs, late of the Continental Line, that he was not bewitched. Narrating the incident to his wife, she called him a fool not to have seen how matters were from the first: of course 't was the captain's intended; and she 'd thank Stubbs to hand that guinea over to her for safe-keeping before he should spend it on any old loafer that might come limping along declaring himself a veteran of the war.

Inside her mud-bespattered coach Lucilla cowered, striving for strength to encounter what might be to come. She thought nothing of fatigue, hunger, the ordeal of the journey. Every feeling was merged into intense present anxiety. And now the lanterns of the town, swinging at intervals upon ropes stretched before the houses, peered at them dimly through the fog. They passed quiet little homes, whose inmates had already gone to rest; Dogberrys prowling moist and solitary, who gazed after them in astonishment

at the apparition ; and so to the quarter designated by the landlord of the *Dog and Duck*.

It was a modest suburb, given over to the dwellings of artisans, who esteemed themselves fortunate in possessing one of its small, detached cottages set in gardens on either side of an unpaved country road. At the turn into Sweetbrier Lane a smithy in full blast threw a red glare upon the way, making it harder for the horses to plunge into the Stygian darkness beyond. They came finally to a halt before the only dwelling wherein there was a light.

And to this humble refuge had her beloved come? Poor Lucilla, stumbling between the wet bushes of a little path under Peter's escort, felt as if she were wandering in a dream. The sound of their footsteps startled from his attitude of utter despondency a man sitting on a bench in the shelter of an arbor of vines built as a canopy for the door-stone. As he got up with a dazed air, Lucilla uttered a stifled cry :

"Arnold ! you here ?"

"Yes, it is I, Lucilla. Don't shrink from me, please ; I am miserable enough, God knows. I have been coming here secretly and waiting these three nights past to see—to see what my sentence is to be. I could not breathe in that little room inside, hearing the clock tick and the noises overhead. Lucilla, would you mind if I come in with you now ? It is cold, and my clothes are wet."

"How is he?" she asked, trying to keep the shudder out of her voice.

"Quiet for the last hour, and that gives hope. If he lives, 't will be thanks to his glorious little nurse.

And Adamson—there are no words for his pluck and unselfishness about the whole affair. He feels for me, Lucilla, if you can't. He has given me leave to come and go in his house as I will. See, the door is on the latch, and we may go in. Now and again they come down to tell me how he is. If you could bear to be alone with me, send your servants back, and we will watch together. But you are tired; you have traveled far. Will you not rather go home, and let me see that you have the first news of a change?"

"When I came post from the Manor just to be near him?" she said, tightening her lips.

As they stepped indoors, his dress, brushing hers, drew from her a movement of repulsion that Arnold did not miss. The faint light from a single taper in a saucer of fragrant bay-berry wax upon the mantel-shelf showed each the other's face—hers pale, care-worn, his haggard, pleading, wretched. His discolored clothes were saturated with dampness, his eyes heavy for want of sleep, his expression that of one on the verge of extremity.

"Lucilla, don't turn from me. If I never have another chance, let me tell you here and now that, before God, I did not mean to kill him. My hand wavered when I saw he would not aim at me, and a cloud came over my brain. I saw myself as I was, and confusion filled my heart. I was totally unnerved when I fired the fatal shot. Lucilla, Adamson believes me; and he loves Hope like a brother. If the worst comes to the worst, I am prepared to make atonement by giving my own poor life. Should he die to-night I shall not be living by to-morrow."

"Arnold, is that the part of a brave man?" she said, a sense of pity coming into her aching heart. "Will you not promise me to dismiss such terrible thoughts from your mind, and, if it is as you say, to try rather to live down your misfortune?"

"I can no longer judge between right and wrong. My misery has left me weak and dizzy. For days to have wandered like Cain, hiding from the sight of men, knowing I had lost you forever, and carrying this awful weight—"

"I feel for you, Arnold, truly," she replied, stretching out her hand.

He would not take it, but fell on his knees beside her, clutching at the hem of her garment and crying like a child.

"Hush!" said Lucilla, starting suddenly, a rush of color coming into her cheeks.

There was a sound of footsteps on the narrow stairs. A man whom Lucilla did not know came into the room, and, seeing her, stopped in astonishment, looking from her to Arnold, who had risen and turned away his face.

"I am Mrs. Warriner," explained the lady, with all her stately grace. "It has been very painful to come and find my cousin here, as you may know. But oh, speak! you have news; tell me—no, no, don't; I can't bear it yet, if it's not good. Tell me only that he—that he—"

"He will live!" said another voice, as Lucilla's was choked with tears. It was Eve who spoke, coming out of the shadow of the little entry to be among them—Eve, pale and worn, and the light of a great joy on her face.

In her moment of supreme relief, Lucilla was conscious of a new, dull pain.

"He is sleeping sweetly, and the fever is all gone," went on the girl, joyfully, "and the physicians have told us that if this were so to-night he will get well."

Arnold Warriner, shaking like a leaf, turned and strode from the room, followed by Adamson.

"And now that you are here," added Eve, with exquisite self-effacement, "he will do even better soon. If he should wake and find you near, instead of Luke and me, it would seem like heaven to him. Since the first he has thought of you, called for you, till my heart ached because I could n't satisfy him. Ah, madam, should you need assurance, believe me, 't is you only and always that have possessed his love."

"This from you!" stammered Lucilla, wondering. "You, whose happiness it was to come first to him when he fell—whose right it is to stay by him in this house—"

"It was my happiness to be of service to the child of my dearest friends and benefactors. And I have the right to remain in this house," she went on, her voice breaking, but holding her head bravely aloft, "because I am its owner's wife."

The words were scarce uttered when Lucilla, born again to radiant happiness and love and beauty, threw her fair arms around the other's neck and clasped her to her breast.

"Married—married to another man! And I could so misjudge you as to think you wanted him! Oh! I have been so afraid of you, have so dreaded lest you should some day draw him away from me! But I see

now how, as usual, I have done wrong; I see that you are an angel of good news; and since you have saved him for me, I could go down on my knees to thank you and ask your pardon. Let me be your friend, your sister. Bring your good husband back again, that I may kiss his hand and bless him for his goodness to my Laurence. For mine he is. I shall win him to full health, and make his life a glory with my love.

“What! crying now, dear soul, when all is well? Fie! you and I must smile together, and I must save your strength and let you rest. Go, find my cousin—bid him take my coach and servants and use my house as his own, and say I shall stay here. If you ’ll have me, that is—and you won’t turn me out, will you?—me that have come so far? And then take me to him. Never fear I ’ll disturb him. I ’ll nurse him gently as I would a cradled babe. Ah, I can’t wait; take me to him—quick, quick, quick!”

Eve bowed her head. She could not trust herself to answer, now that her sacrifice was made complete. She could not tell Lucilla that she had married Luke the morning after the duel—married Luke because otherwise there would have been no chance for her to be with Laurence and give him her hourly care.

Presently, hand in hand, the two women went up the stairs.

PART II
IN NEW YORK OF TO-DAY

PART II

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I



REX ADAMSON sat after dinner with his father on the first evening of his return from a voyage around the world. It had been bitter weather on the North Atlantic—a succession of storms strewing the home coast with wrecks, and sending many a ship adrift at the mercy of the waters, to be heard from days afterward, or never.

Rex had enjoyed the distinction of steaming up New York Bay in a huge ocean liner completely sheathed in ice, her decks and rigging looking as if hewn from Pentelic marble, rosy with morning sun—a sight of a lifetime for the eyes waiting her on shore to greet her arrival.

His father had been among those who had more or less reason to welcome home passengers thus delivered from the perils of the deep. Rex had never before seen in the paternal countenance, as viewed from the deck while the ship was pulling in beside her pier, the look of yearning of a parent for his beloved offspring.

It made Rex feel rather uncomfortable and shy. He could hardly believe that the usually shrewd and unemotional face of Job Adamson, the famous financier, was drawn into lines resembling that of an old woman about to cry. But the shabby old derby hat tilted backward, the rusty overcoat, and hands covered with woolen mittens—garments that among New-Yorkers of the business world had long inspired an appreciative sense of a power that was fairly revered—left no doubt of Job's identity.

"The old boy is cut up since my poor mother's death," thought the son—though he was ashamed to consider the phenomenon with a feeling so impersonal. "How strange, when they were always sparing over her ambitious schemes for me! The question is, am I glad she carried her point, and gave me every advantage of foreign training and wide acquaintance? Hum! Can't answer yet, till I've been shaken into place a bit. Jove! I'd forgotten what a queer outfit the pater wears. And he looks shriveled, somehow. Who'd believe they'd kotow to me on account of his name, in all sorts of odd corners of the globe?"

"He's not written me a line in six months—only cabled to acknowledge my letters. Well, if he does care, there'll be one more to welcome me than I expected on Columbia's shores, since Jack's out West. Bru-r-r! Cold as Greenland, and looks like it, too. What a snowfall they've had! No wonder all those people huddled down there seem frozen up and lifeless."

When Rex walked down the gang-plank, for the

first time in his recollection his father smiled as he shook his hand.

"I'm glad you're all right," said the elder, briefly. "There was a meeting of the directors of Y. & Z. Company this morning, but I excused myself and left them to come down to meet you. You'll get up to the house alone, I suppose, unless you want to stop at your club for luncheon? I'll join you at dinner-time. Bad trip, was n't it?"

"The toughest I ever made. The waves regular corks, looked sixty feet high, and she cutting right through the crest of 'em. For three days the water poured over the decks like a mill-race. But she behaved like a duck, bless her; and here we are. Very good of you, sir, to take the trouble to meet me. As soon as I can get my luggage out of the maw of your customs officials, I'll be off to see your new palace. It'll be like a fairy-tale, I'm sure—the way Americans always do things."

"Your customs—why did n't you say 'you Americans,' Rex?" asked the older man, peevishly.

"Never mind, father; I'll get straight in a day or two," said Rex, good-humoredly. He recognized a reproof dating from his first return from an English university, whither his mother had insisted upon his going.

As he drove in a cab up-town through blizzard-smitten streets, between banks of high-piled snow, along house-fronts fringed at top with drooping white mantles, Rex whistled in astonishment at the desolate appearance of the city of his nativity. He felt as forlorn as Macaulay's New-Zealander on the ruins of

London Bridge. But in Fifth Avenue there was a semblance of returning life, and his spirits began to rise.

Eastward of Central Park the cab came to a final halt in its toilsome progress before the portal of one of the lordliest of the many palaces in that locality—a dwelling from which upholsterers with their step-ladders and hammers, and delayed decorators, had not yet fled.

“By Jove!” thought the young man, as he followed the new butler and footman inside the spacious, mellow-tinted hall. “The thing ’s actually well done.”

He had found reason to repeat this eulogy more than once before the servants, withdrawing after dinner, left the two men to themselves. The slaves of the lamp that in former days were so difficult to secure in New York, no matter what the money paid, had come at the call of an expert housekeeper and butler, both of English origin, to supply his every want. Remembering the old house farther down the avenue, wherein his mother had fussed over incapable domestics during all his visits home, Rex could hardly refrain from expressing his glad astonishment at this reform. But he thought it better to take the whole business of translation into new splendor as a matter of course, until his father should choose to invite his comments.

The great room, arranged for a girdle of electricity above the pictures, was now left in shadow, save for a few side-lights and the gleam of candles on the round table that stood like an island of snow in a sea of Turkey rugs, aided by the flicker from logs burning

in a deep hearth underneath a fine old carved mantel-piece, carried off bodily from an impoverished *schloss* in Germany.

All over the place Rex had been running upon spoils of the Old World assembled with marvelous cleverness to deck this mansion of an American who did not know a Gobelin tapestry from a landscape rug woven in Connecticut. Pictures, books, carvings, armor, lacquers, bronzes, floor-coverings, walls, and furniture were eminently well chosen and well brought together. Only the drawing-rooms, boudoir, and an up-stairs sitting-room were left partly in the rough, with the doors closed on them, which Rex had noted with a shrug and smile.

"I'm glad you like the house," said his father, under the exhilaration of three glasses of iced water drunk during dinner and a cup of black coffee afterward. "I had the best man there is, and told him to go ahead and do it as if he meant to move in here himself. I guess that put him on his mettle. I had nothing to do but sign the checks, luckily. This last has been 'bout as busy a year as I remember."

"There must have been a good lot of your autographs sent out," said Rex, indifferently.

"Well, I guess the year's work has paid for it," answered his father, the muscles around his mouth relaxing faintly. "I promised her I'd do the thing in style, and it seems I have."

"You have, certainly, and I congratulate you. Poor mother! I wish she could have lived to see it! She was a woman of such boundless energy, I can't think of her as forever still."

"She was a good wife to me, and a good mother to you, though there were some mistakes that never can be righted. If the others had lived it would n't ha' mattered so much, but I've no stock in a name like Reginald. Lukes and Jobs and Johns and Samuels we've had a-plenty since the first of us settled in America; and I carried my point 'bout naming the four boys born before you. But Mis' Adamson—your mother, I should say—wa'n't lucky in raising any of her children past babyhood, till you came along. Then she would n't have any of the old names used over again for the child of our middle age. Said 't would be tempting Providence. And I let her have her way. Reginald! I declare, I'm sometimes ashamed to write it in a check."

Rex, accustomed to the old grievance, laughed aloud—a hearty, boyish laugh that did him good, and insensibly brightened his father's fretful face.

"So long as your feelings don't compel you to withhold that kind act altogether, I'll get along, father. And as to the name it's linked to, I sometimes think you'd be more forbearing with foreign countries if you could see what weight that carries everywhere with people who read newspapers and can appreciate honorable success. True, it's nearly ruined me sometimes, by turning all the harpies on me, in good society and out of it. Do you know, sir, I can't get anybody to believe you've never crossed the sea?"

"America's good enough for me," replied Mr. Adamson, a smile visible only in a few additional wrinkles around his eyes. "I did n't care a continental 'bout a new house for myself. But 't was her plan.

She wanted I should build it against the time you got tired of roving and came home to settle down. She'd have come out in fine society, no doubt. Mis' Adamson—your mother, I should say—was a powerful ambitious woman, in some ways. I felt sort of driven to get it done before you got here. Perhaps I wa'n't always what she deserved to have me be."

"Your architect brought conscience to his work," said the young man, looking about him critically. "I might as well own up I expected to have my teeth set on edge, remembering that other poor, dear, awful old shanty of ours."

"'T was a fine house in its day," answered Job. "She always said we'd educated you above our tastes, and she wanted we should try and catch up with you. This one is nice enough, I s'pose, but too darned big. I've given up trying to sleep in the room they fixed up for me, and have got an iron bedstead in the dressing-room. The library's 'bout the best of the bunch, to my thinking. I sit there of a morning to read my newspaper before I go down-town—in that window where the sun comes in. Sometimes I doze in there of an evening, or play solitaire before I go to bed. Your mother and I used to play cribbage together of an evening."

"Poor old dad, this house is too big for you alone!" said the son, with an impulse of sympathy. "Now I'm home for good, we must try to brighten it."

"It's to be yours when you marry, Rex; and then I'll get out and go back to the old one. They wanted me to let that, but I would n't. I've kept every stick of the furniture as it was, and left a man and his

wife to care for it, just as if I were going to step in any day."

"It'll be a long time before you step out of here, old gentleman!" exclaimed Rex, who was not a lady's man, and had, as suggested, so far successfully eluded all efforts to constrain his freedom from mothers and daughters in two hemispheres, to say nothing of widows on shipboard and all manner of women to whom the name of Adamson and American millions were synonymous.

"Father, speaking of names, have you no record of your progenitors? Not that it makes the least difference to me to have anybody behind me except you and my splendid old grandsire, whose portrait I'm glad to see you have hung out yonder in the hall. His was an astonishing personality. Fellows whom I tell about him won't believe how he made his pile from sheer sagacity and mastery of men. He knew how to choose his tools better than any one I ever heard of. There must have been something in his veins that came down to him from earlier sources—some strong woman, probably; and I'd like to make her acquaintance, even now."

"It's little I know 'bout 'em," replied Job, reflectively. "My father, as you know well, was too busy a man to talk much, and he put me to business just as soon as I was out of school. All he ever told me was his people had moved out of New York city down into Long Island when he was a kid, the last to survive out of their family of five sons. Queer there ain't ever been more 'n one son to a generation of us that reached middle life. They were North of

Ireland folks. I know that. And there's a family Bible that turned up when we were moving that's got all their names and dates. My father was Samuel, his father was Luke, and my name came from a great-grandfather named Job Watson.

"When I was a little shaver, I remember well father taking me down to spend Sundays with my grandmother on Long Island; but she died when I was still a boy, and that was the end of 'em. Her husband, Luke Adamson, was a master builder in New York when 't was the seat of government, and after; and he laid up a good sum of money for those days; but they lost one child after another, just like us, and moved to the country to try to save my father, so he always said. You hit the nail on the head, Rex, when you said there was a strong woman behind us. Take her all in all, I don't believe there was ever such another as my grandmother Adamson."

"What was her Christian name?" asked Rex, wondering at his own late-found interest in these questions of genealogy.

"The name of the mother of all humanity—plain Eve; though she was anything but plain. As I remember the old lady, she 'd been a widow for some years, but was dressed always in gray, with a kind er crimped white cap. Her face at seventy-odd was as near like an angel's as ever I expect to see one, and her hair high-colored reddish, her step as light and her back as straight as a girl's. My mother was jealous of her, I reckon, as there wa'n't much sociability between 'em. My mother was a cl'ar-grit Yankee girl from Massachusetts; a fine woman, but shut

up in herself. Father did n't get to see grandmother as often as he 'd ha' liked. But she 'd plenty to do, sick-nursing and missionarying her neighbors, and entertaining the elders of her church. There was a room set aside for them, kept white as a lily, sir. I was always afraid to set foot across the sill. You won't laugh, Rex, if I tell you I bought back that little house last year, and am getting it repaired and fenced in, to keep in memory of her."

"I like my great-grandmother Eve. Tell me some more of her," said the young man, surprised by the flush of interest in the speaker's parchment face.

"Father always said she 'd taught him honesty and justice first, then to be brisk and act when the moment came. She 'd more common sense than any woman he ever saw, he said, and an A 1 temper (which my mother had n't), but was never over-gay. Sort of sad, and no end pious—and particular, you 'd think. He 'd never been let set foot in a theater, and would n't touch a card. She 's buried down yonder in the little graveyard at Chinquasset Cove, and last year I put a monument over her as high as my wife's—the best money could buy.

"You see, when a man comes to my time of life, and is living all alone, he begins to think of these kind of things, Rex. I never was much of a one for sentimental notions; but nowadays—sometimes—this last night or two especially, when the storm was raging and I was thinking about your ship—"

He stopped, and took another sip of water from a carafe left at his hand. Rex did not say a word, greatly to Job's relief.

"I s'pose if those good folks could look in on us now they 'd wonder," Mr. Adamson resumed. "They thought themselves mightily set up with a sitting-room and best bedroom over and above the wants of the family. Father said his mother kept her house like honeycomb; and I never walk along West Twenty-third Street and smell that lavender the peddlers sell on trays without thinking, somehow, of my grandma. There, now, boy, I 've told you all I know. Some day we 'll get out the family Bible and have a regular orgy of ancestors and dates. Say, Rex, d' ye know some of these Revolutionary societies were after me, the other day, to become a member? Think they 'd be satisfied with grandfather Luke and great-grandfather Job as my contributions? No, sir! I rather beg to be excused. No pretense about me. I 'm satisfied to be Samuel L. Adamson's son and representative. The fortune my father left me I 've doubled and trebled, but I 've never put on frills."

"The L stood for Laurenee, did n't it, in my grandfather's name? Now, why in the dickens did n't you dub me that instead of your hated Reginald? And, by the way, where did the Laurences come into our family annals?"

"It 's a queer thing. I asked father the same question once, and he told me it was given him in recollection of one of his mother's 'earliest and dearest friends.' Those were her very words when he inquired of her, as boys will, where he got his middle name."

"That reminds me," exclaimed Rex, rebounding to

the present, "that a man came over in the ship with me—a capital young fellow—named Laurence Hope. He's in Hartley, Lauder & Odenheimer's law firm, and they sent him across the ocean to question a fellow they wanted to get as a witness in the Spang will case, and had failed to find in this country. Hope spent only three days on the other side, found his man in a hunting-box at Melton Mowbray, got an interview with him, and returned. I asked him—once when the steamer was alternately standing on her head and carrying it high in air in the midst of our worst gale, and we were all battened down below—what he thought of the Spang will case; and he told me to go to thunder. I don't know when I've met anybody I liked so much on short acquaintance as that lad. Who are they, do you know? I'm awfully behind on my New York."

"They've put a 'Social Register' on the library table," answered his father, dryly; "and I think it'll be better worth your while to study that, and leave the family Bible be. Seems to me I've heard of the Hopes somewhere, though."

"It appears they live in an old-fashioned house in an old-fashioned quarter—some 'Place' or other, of which the name escapes me. I should judge they are rather poorish; and I know there's a pretty sister, for he showed me her photograph one day on the Banks when it was blowing holy Moses, and we were trying to hang on by our eyelids in the smoke-room. And he knows Jack Warriner. Confound it, I wish old Jack were in town!"

At this moment the butler, returning on tiptoes

with a confidential air, announced that Mr. John Warriner had called, and wished to know whether Mr. Rex could see him now, or should he come back later.

"Come back later? Great snakes, tell him to come in here!" cried Rex, delighted. "Father, this is the best luck I've struck. No, don't run away, please, if you won't be bored with our talk—oh, I forgot; Jack's always been in your black books, has n't he?"

"I've no use for him, sir, no use," answered the great man, putting his hands together behind him in a characteristic attitude and looking obstinate.

"You think he was my evil genius at Oxford, and all that? But there's no harm in Jack, I'll swear; and a more delightful fellow never drew breath. Since they've lost all their money it's been hard for him to keep along, and he's had to try different trades. But you must remember my poor mother had a great fancy for his sister, and never failed to urge on me to try to win Miss Euphrosyne for a bride."

"Mis' Adamson—your mother, I mean—had some notions I never understood," said that lady's relict. "One of 'em was wanting to hitch our wagon on to some one of 'old colonial stock.' Who cares for colonial stock, anyhow?"

"So long as he holds your number of shares in Standard Oil," replied Rex, laughing, "I suppose, nobody. But do stop and shake hands with Jack, sir, and I'll take him off to my own den up-stairs. Capital quarters, those you've got for me. And I say, father, would n't it be as well not to forget to inquire

for Miss Euphrosyne? Hope tells me she's studying to be a trained nurse. You know my mother was really fond of her."

But Job, after the unwonted expansion of his retrospective mood, had now relapsed into his gray, shy, customary self, and was gliding out by another door as the butler ushered in the object of his dislike.

To a casual observer young Warriner was certainly a pleasing semblance of a man. Women admired his tall, erect figure, straight features, the bloom of a girl upon his olive cheeks, and what they called his "look of race." Men satirized Jack's female devotees, but were as closely drawn to him by a certain manly quality in his make-up. He was an athlete of renown, a good sailor, horseman, golfer, dancer, and everything requiring active skill and daring.

Every now and then, in his checkered career, Jack would go under and disappear from the sight of his friends; it was understood that the demon of drink had him in his clutches; and then the world's trumpet cried him outside the pale. But again, unexpectedly, he would turn up, handsome, debonair, with clear eyes and rosy cheeks, and people asked each other how could such things as they had heard be true; and Jack would step into his old place with a beaming smile, and all would be forgiven—till next time.

Rex, who had met him first at Oxford, felt Jack's fascination keenly, and had surrendered without a protest. He had since befriended him in a thousand ways—had taken him off for cruises in Job Adamson's famous yacht, that otherwise would have remained out of commission; for shooting expeditions

in the great West, crossing the continent in Job Adamson's special directors' car; and would have invited him to be his guest in the recent circuit of the globe, but for Job's positive refusal to give the scheme his sanction.

The Warriners were old New-Yorkers, long of the steady, solvent variety. For years they had lived in an ancestral mansion sorely jostled by down-town trade, and kept their hold upon New York society. During the period after the war between the States, when shoddy aristoeracy first came to the fore, the Warriners were still in a position to arch their eyebrows at the mention of any prominent new-comer whose pedigree had yet to be brought out of chaos into form and substance. In fact, as Job Adamson had once been heard to say, they were "little tin gods on wheels."

The present incumbents of the family honors were the widow of the late ruling Warriner who had died insolvent years back, her son and daughters three. The son we have just seen enter Mr. Adamson's dining-room. The eldest girl, straightforward and rather "intense," had cut loose from her mama and gone to study the fine art of nursing in the grand new St. Jude's Hospital on the Riverside Drive. The second girl, Emily, was a handsome devotee of fashion, which, as she could now no longer enjoy it from the top, she was content to take from any quarter accessible below the apex of the pile.

Mrs. Warriner, herself a blue-blooded personage with a high nose and dissatisfied expression, had been obliged since her widowhood to struggle hard to

keep her children supplied with the means of living. She and the girls had moved out of the old house, now occupied by a Society of Occult Sciences on the ground floor, a bookbindery, a tailor, and a Swedish masseur higher up. The only niche known to belong to this once dominant family in the city of their birth was a flat up-town, pinched as to entryways, and with barely space for beds in its chambers, but rejoicing in an elevator and in servitors with buttony attire.

Miss Bessie Warriner, youngest of the three damsels, and not so confirmed in worldly observance as her mother would have liked, was a pleasant little body, good to look at, but not pretty. She had been christened "Betsy" after some long gone grandmother, and now threatened to take back the nomenclature discarded by her mother in her infancy, and adopt the profession of conducting pet dogs out to walk.

"Betsy Warriner, spinster, and likely so to remain, will be pleased to take engagements for the daily exercise of canines belonging to the Four Hundred.—N. B. Great Danes preferred.

"How would that look, mummy, in the daily papers?" the young woman had inquired. "You know it is really quite chic to earn one's money nowadays. And I believe that vocation would develop my latent genius as nothing else could do. I have thought over every other conceivable branch of industry."

"Bessie, you are impossible," said the wan mother, who had been lying broad awake half the night before, plotting how to secure for her daughters new dresses for a coming ball, as well as to provide a certain sum

Jack had told her he must have by the end of the month or be "irrevocably squashed!" She got no credit for it from her offspring, no sympathy from her friends, who thought she had much better throw up the sponge and go somewhere to live in the provinces, or, better still, in respectable vacuity abroad.

Mrs. Warriner did not want to go abroad. She loved New York, she believed in it, clung to its traditions, tried desperately to keep her place and her children's in its esteem; but year by year the tide had swelled more strongly against her. She would soon be overborne and carried out to sea. How was it possible for her little frail earthen pots to go on much longer in company with those made of iron but overlaid with gold?

She saw disaster ahead, and shuddered, but determined to keep on while she might. Perhaps Emily would marry; perhaps Jack would reform, and win for himself an heiress, of whom there was, dear knows, always a supply cropping up. Jack, her beautiful, winning Jack, could, in her opinion, once have married whom he chose. But Jack had not chosen. He laughed at his chances, took no notice of women whom Mrs. Warriner considered had actually thrown themselves at his head. She had a horrible, heart-sickening fear that Jack was secretly smitten with the most detrimental person of her acquaintance—a mere child—a chit just out of the nursery—of another old family, reduced like themselves, just about to make her appearance in society; and, worse still, she feared the chit was in love with Jack.

When, earlier that winter, Jack had formed a business alliance with an artistic photographer (in the

exercise of the one paying accomplishment Mr. War-riner possessed), and had been sent to a Western city to establish a branch studio, his mother had heaved a great sigh of relief.

But alas! Jack had soon written her that he had had a blooming row with the Johnnie who considered himself his boss; next, that the rows were increasing; lastly, that he'd thrown up the whole business and was coming home.

And now he had come home—Bessie flying into his arms with every expression of artless rapture, Emily looking at him with shut lips and coldly contemptuous eyes, his poor mother kissing him with blank despair in her heart. For the seventy-and-seventh time it was all to begin again.

Jack assured her, when they were alone, that he had timed his return to welcome home the best friend he ever had—Rex Adamson, who was now about to settle in business of some kind, and would surely put him into a berth. With the utmost good humor he rallied his mother upon the failure of her previous projects to bring about a match between Euphrosyne and Job Adamson's heir; told her that while there was life there was hope in that respect; and swore by all that was holy that, with Rex's help, he meant to turn over an entirely new leaf, work hard, rake in the dollars, and make the Warriners again hold their heads up with the best.

When he left her to go to call on Rex, Mrs. Warri-ner sat bolt upright with a new apprehension. Was Jack doing all this for the sake of that little pauper, Lucy Hope?

II



ES; Jack Warriner was a very pleasing figure of a man. Adamson, who jumped up to meet him and pump-handled his arm with enthusiastic welcome, felt his blood warm at sight of him. Jack declining even a sip of cognac or green mint, but accepting a cigar, the two went off by means of Job Adamson's private lift (which he never used) to the airy top story of the house, wherein Rex had insisted upon having his own quarters fitted up. So long had Jack been accustomed to enjoy the best externals of life through others, it did not cost him a pang to praise the luxurious and perfectly appointed bachelor's suite Rex had to exhibit. He looked over its treasures with a critic's eye, suggested some changes, discussed others with his friend, and finally dropped into an arm-chair before the fire, savoring his cigar in a perfectly contented frame of mind.

"You see, I've had some of these superfluous servants of my father's up here all the afternoon unpacking the chests of rubbish I picked up and sent ahead of me. That accounts for the litter of curios. No doubt I'll be sick of lots of 'em and chuck 'em into the rubbish-heap before long. One always does. But talk of not buying for one's self! That's half the fun—

getting set upon by those picturesque sharps who dive out of odd corners and let you walk over their stomachs, if you 'll only buy. I 've trotted about so much, and seen so much, one would think I 'd get tired of the play-toys of travel ; but, thank heaven, I 'm tired of nothing yet. I enjoy life more every day. But I 'm just a little bit scared at coming back home to settle, Jack. I 'm afraid New York will fail to hold me in its machine. And I can see by my father's eye that he 's reached the last limit of patience with having me a gentleman of leisure. He cabled me to come over and 'learn the ropes.' He 's thinking he 's getting old, and I must learn to take his place. Does he believe, I wonder, that I expect to go down to that dingy office every day of my life, and stay there till nearly dark, piling up more money—for what under the heaven above us ? ”

“ Oh, I don't know,” said Jack, as if his pockets were full of the thing so despised. “ Money 's the steam that makes the engines go. And one can stand having a good lot of it.”

“ But he 's fabulously rich. I don't believe he knows, himself, how much he has already. Long ago I settled with him to give me a stated allowance—ample, I dare say, but not beyond the dreams of avarice, by any means. If I ran short I waited till the next instalment came round. I 've always been a simple fellow in my tastes. This truck I 've piled up here and my books represent my highest personal expenditure. And I get the credit for fairly wallowing in wealth ! ”

“ Good Lord, Adamson ! To hear you talk ! ” ex-

claimed the other, irrepressibly. "If I had your chances I 'd know how to use 'em. Why, with the money you 'll inherit you 'll be a king—a king!"

"My father's a sovereign of finance, and his father was before him. What has it profited either of them? I suppose by multiplying enjoyments for other people one may keep workmen industrious; but I 'll give you my word, all I 've ever seen of plutocrat society here makes me want to keep out of it. I got more joy from Oxford's halls and gardens, and the Iffley, than I ever can from Fifth Avenue and Central Park, and that awful grind down-town. One of our nice old dons told me once there is real beauty, though often a latent one, in whatever the human mind creates upon necessity. I hope mine will create something before long."

"Strange how I brought an entirely different impression of Oxford to America. To me it was pleasant, but merely an episode into which I did n't exactly fit. I always thought you 'd be the kind of fellow who 'd be ruined by it for home, and now I know it. Take my advice, Rex, and be a rose-leaf in a cup of wine, like men. It's easier than doing the Omar Khayyám act and investigating the meanings of things. I dare say in time you 'll settle down into a model young millionaire, and feel exceedingly resigned. If you want to study the law of contrasts, however, begin first here, now. As usual, I'm cleaned out and at the bottom of the ladder, wondering how in the deuce I'm going to get up. By this time I'm willing to take advantage of your various offers to set me squarely upon my feet. Strange, fabulous, apoc-

ryphal as it may seem, I want to begin work in earnest—work that will bring cash quickly, work that will help me to keep straight, as I've done for six months past, and look forward to better things."

"Jack, my dear boy, I'm awfully glad to hear it!" exclaimed Rex, heartily.

He did not know exactly how to go on, and Jack, with an angelic smile, saved him the trouble of trying.

"I knew there would be joy in heaven, and all that kind of thing, you know. Yes, I'm in earnest now, if I never was before. I've thrown over that beastly photographing because it was n't fit for me, and I've got an opening elsewhere—that is, if somebody (not to say the fellow who's been ramming at me to go and do it, off and on, for some years past) will step forward and give me a start. And I'll swear I'll do him credit. I've been trying to wring help out of the home people, but they're squeezed dry."

"You should have first come to me," said Rex, simply.

Experience with Warriner had taught him many things, but never that Jack would close down on him for money in cold blood. Had this been the case, their friendship had not hung together so long.

So they talked details, and Rex satisfied himself that the rolling stone was at last really in a way to come to a halt, where it would determine for itself whether or not it would remain stationary. He felt a new sense of the satisfaction that lies in power when he planned to help his friend with both money and influence—and, in fancy, widened out Jack's plan to

include a push from Job Adamson that would hasten matters with a bound.

When they had reached this point Rex surprised on his companion's face a very startling apparition—almost as startling as the tearful expression worn by his father when his ship touched the pier: Jack looked genuinely humble and ashamed.

“I'm not fit for the company I keep—that's clear,” said Mr. Warriner, getting up to pace the room, then stopping before the fireplace and tossing back his head. “Since I'm in the melting mood to-night, old chap, and you've shown the patience of a saint and the friendship of—oh, well, I can't express it, and I won't try—I'll tell you the truth why I want to straighten out and do my best and be a man again. I've fallen in love.”

“I've been waiting to hear that come out,” said Rex, surveying him curiously. “*Cherchez la femme* occurred to me some time ago.”

“I have known her always—or, at least, that she was there. Until last year, when she suddenly blossomed out into a beauty, she was a lankish young female with a club of hair tied up with a ribbon, a good deal of black stocking, and an inordinate taste for tom-boy doings. Our families are connected—or were, in the dark ages of old New York. I believe one of them had our ancestral property and then we got it back—much good it does us now, when there is n't a beggarly store or warehouse left us in city real estate, and only some barren acres of a run-to-seed ‘manor’ up the Hudson that nobody will buy. My mater could tell you all about it, if she would, but just

now she 's on her dignity with the Hopes, because she suspects me of spooning in that direction."

"What! Laurence Hope's people—the fellow I crossed with?"

"Just so. Of course you like Laurie; everybody does. I do, in spite of his having been always held up to me as a model. He 's what virtuous business men call nervy, and wide-awake, and sure to get ahead. The family needs him, since the Hopes have not been of much consequence in the public eye for many a long year. They don't get brief biographies, and startling portraits with puffs attached—in the Sunday papers, I mean. Like us poor, played-out Warriners, they've dropped behind in this tremendous foot-race of New York. The father 's a mild, courteous, Historical-Society and Sons-of-the-Cincinnati kind of old fellow, perfectly satisfied with things as they go, and with having enough to live on in the house where he was born. But Mrs. Hope 's like my mother and sisters and most women nowadays—bitten with ambition to get to the front. She was a Philadelphia woman, with ancestors of Revolutionary date, and, I presume, a pedigree stretching back to prehistoric days in England. They tell me she 's banking largely upon Lucy to — did I tell you her name is Lucy?"

"No; you omitted that particular. Sweet little Wordsworthian prænomen, that. Is she 'a violet by a mossy stone, half hidden from the eye'?"

"She 's fresh enough and sweet enough for anything, but her mother does n't mean her to be hidden long. She was to have made her formal appearance in society in December—did I tell you she 's just nineteen?"

"I 'll make a note of that, too," answered Rex, smiling. It was something new to see Jack Warriner hard hit.

"Well, somebody upped and died in their connection recently, and the *début* was put off—worse luck—till now. Mrs. Hope is going to give a 'tea' for her. Do you know what a New York old family tea is, Adamson? If not, don't inquire!—that is, make an exception in the case of this particular function, which occurs to-morrow afternoon. Another tax upon your friendship. I want you to go there with me as my friend—my particular importation and contribution to society. I suppose you never think, Rex,—such a dear old indifferent fellow as you are,—what a flutter in the *dove-cote* your coming home to live has made here. You are actually the hero of the hour. If I were n't afraid you 'd kick me down-stairs, I 'd tell you about a paragraph announcing your return that came out in this evening's papers."

"Great Scott, Warriner, you make me sick," said Rex, turning red and shuddering.

"It 's true, old man; and you can't get out of it. You and this house are lauded together to the skies, and by to-morrow all the match-makers will be sharp-set in pursuit of you. If I take you to the Hopes' I 'll be welcome as flowers in spring. Every face will beam on me—not that I care about anybody's beaming excepting Lucy's dear mama. It will put the dragon in a good humor with me for the rest of the season. She will give me the freedom of the house. And it 'll cost you nothing but an hour of boredom in your frock-coat."

"If it could have been deferred," went on Rex, as genuinely uncomfortable as a large-sized, fair-skinned, anti-society man can be. "To plunge headlong into vapidty—"

"Come, brace up and take it like a good fellow. I need your prestige to launch me; and some day, if Lucy and I ever see our way out of the snarl of circumstances—by George, Rex, I can joke about almost anything, I think, but I'll stop right here! I'm mad about that girl. To get her, I'd do anything but lie or steal. And I'll own one thing to you, because you are giving me this chance. We are engaged, though the Lord only knows what'll become of it.

"She does n't dare tell her parents, naturally—nor I my people. My poor madre has long ago given up expecting me to realize her ambitions. I'm a gone coon, she thinks. But the Hopes, or Mrs. H., depend on Lucy to conquer the world for them. She is pretty beyond words, merry, light-hearted, daring, and true as steel. Having pledged herself to me, she'd go through fire and water for me. Sometimes my heart misgives me, and I fear that I was a cur to let her pledge herself when she knew actually nothing of the world.

"I've feared it was all an impulse—a girl's fancy that she could reform me. Well, so far she has reformed me. Since she promised herself to me last summer—at a country-house party where we met—I've never touched a drop. I worked this winter till I heard of this opening I told you of. And then I threw the job overboard, resisting a strong impulse to punch my employer's addled head, and came home

to meet you. Not a living soul knows about Lucy and me, Rex, but you. The truth is, I 'm pretty shaky, and I need you to help me to stand firm."

"I 'll help, Jack," said Rex, soberly. He was thinking what an immense responsibility Jack had thrust on him. His sympathy went out to the headlong, loving, impulsive child who had taken up her part of the burden without the faintest knowledge of what Jack was, and had been. It seemed to Rex that what he was asked to do was not exactly nice. But, on the other hand, he could not withhold a hand to pull a sinking comrade out of a quicksand.

All Jack's bravado, slang, and indifference had fled. He stood up, facing Rex like a school-boy who has forgotten his piece. If ever in his misspent life he had been in earnest, it was now. He was mortally in need of Rex.

And amid the lines traced by a thousand reckless and unworthy acts upon Jack Warriner's face, there remained the unquestionable indication that he had been born a gentleman, and that he spoke the truth.

His smile when Rex, without a word, stretched out his hand to him, was, despite his seven-and-twenty years, a boy's; and under its influence Rex ceased to wonder at the self-devotion of Miss Lucy Hope to the cause of Jack's reform.

WHEN, together, the two young men pushed through the crowd at Mrs. Hope's, next afternoon, Rex Adamson, during a halt enforced by those pressing ahead of them to greet the hostess, chanced to cast his eyes upon an old portrait on the wall oppo-

site. Instantly his attention was riveted by it with almost painful intensity.

In mysterious fashion not to be explained, he felt that this face had previously held, would hold, over him some influence of power. How strange and fantastic that he should be possessed with the idea those features were to be intimately connected with his fate, or had in some earlier stage of existence written an inscription upon his mind!

He could not cease from looking at the portrait. It was that of a young woman in the radiancy of beauty and happiness, dressed in the square-cut gown, long waist, and topknots of a hundred years before. The artist who had limned her was of the best of his generation, clearly. The flesh-tints bloomed as in life, the eyes sought his mischievously, the rosy mouth was curved in an undying smile.

"Good heavens, what a beauty!" he said, to cover his confusion when he found Jack eying him sideways with an odd expression, half mockery, half pride. "I never saw anything so vivid. One would swear it is real flesh and blood peeping through a hole in the canvas—like Peg Woffington in Triplet's studio."

"Rex, are you an arch-diplomatist? But I forget—how could you know? Prepare for a surprise when I name you to Mrs. and Miss Hope."

Verily a surprise! "Miss Hope" was the lady of the canvas, stepped out of her frame! Rex had caught but a passing glimpse of the fine-grained, faded mother, who had given him a little hand covered with costly old rings, with a greeting of the most gracious. His gaze was all for Lucy.

He was unaware that the people round them had widened to a circle that gazed at him with whispered comments. He dimly heard Mrs. Hope's velvety voice asking him to come to them in the future, when there would be more chance to make his acquaintance. His attention was rapt by the girl wearing a high white gown and carrying a large bunch of white lilacs, who had met him with such a kind and fearless look out of her soft eyes.

His was the experience of a lifetime, that comes to some lucky men. Without the possibility of a doubt in his mind, he knew that he had met his ideal woman—the dream-maiden whose spell, for weal or woe, is cast the moment one encounters her.

And she was Jack Warriner's betrothed, to screen whose affair with his friend he had come here, all unsuspecting.

Rex Adamson's slow pulses quickened to a sudden maddening gallop, and a mist passed over his brain. To hide it he looked over again at the portrait, and said some commonplace words regarding his mistake in believing it to be an antique.

"But it is an antique—not my portrait, but that of my great-grandmama," she said, blushing. "People who are in the habit of coming here are so accustomed to the resemblance they've stopped noticing it. The 'Lady of the Duel,' we've always called her; and I bear her name—Lucilla Chester Hope. I think Lucilla sounds foolish in these days, and I made the girls at school call me Lucy. My brother Laurie said you, too, are in revolt over your Christian name, Mr. Adamson. I think we ought all to be numbered

or lettered in our babyhood, and left to choose for ourselves when we arrive at an age to think. Laurie came out better in the deal than I."

"I must seem to you a blithering idiot," said Rex, who had recovered his usual unperturbed exterior. "But I 'll swear I feel as if I had known you, or the 'Lady of the Duel,' somewhere. The conviction strikes me with extraordinary force."

"It may be a case of reincarnation," said the girl. "And in the old days you may have been her friend. I hope so, I am sure."

"Hardly likely, since my people had not then appeared on the surface of social life."

"Don't say so. I mean to believe we were all on the best of terms. Though it will make Mr. Warriner feel uncomfortable, since his ancestor and mine were not," she added, with a half-nervous attempt for the first time to introduce Jack into the conversation.

"You know, Rex, or you don't know," said Jack, "that tradition makes my forebear the one who fought for that fair Lucilla on the wall, and unfortunately lost her. But I don't care for those old Johnnies, anyhow—and in this generation," he added in a tone that reached Lucy's ear alone, "the Warriners will sing a different tune."

She did not answer him, but resumed her bantering chat with his friend.

"By the way, Mr. Adamson, Laurie has done nothing since he landed yesterday but extol your merits as traveling companion. We had already asked him to bring you to see us, but of course he would n't have done so. Brothers always think it does n't pay their

friends to call on their own womenkind. Bad boy! He said he 'd be kept down-town this afternoon on business for the firm. But dear! we saw through him in a moment. He would n't be caught at a tea at home, though I will say he sent me a stunning bouquet of orchids, which I call noble on the part of my impoverished Laurie."

While speaking these careless words she lifted to her face, as if merely to inhale their fragrance, the white lilacs, evidently selected to be carried from among the many tokens of the kind heaped around her on mantelpiece, grand piano, and cabinets. Adamson could not help seeing that, with the daintiest of touches, like a butterfly on and off, she at the same time brushed them with her lips. He was amazed at the frankness of character, the abandonment to loyal feeling, this action betokened; for at once, by the dark-red flush arising in Jack Warriner's face, Rex knew that it had been appropriated by her lover as the answer she had withheld in words.

And then Mrs. Hope, who thought she had allowed Mr. Adamson to absorb her daughter as long as unwritten law permits on such an occasion, interposed with a fresh batch of presentations to the débutante. The young men had no recourse but to drift away into the crowd, each trying to throw off an emotion he did not wish the other to fathom.

Jack, rallying first, introduced his friend to a Mrs. Arrowtip, a nimble-witted widow of a certain age, who retained amid her trenchant views of contemporaneous society good nature enough to keep her secure of acceptance in the fashionable circles she contemned.

As soon as they were left together she launched into a stream of lively talk.

"Jack knew—the Warriners are my cousins, you must understand—it is a nest of cousins here this afternoon—that, like everybody else, I was simply dying to meet you, Mr. Adamson. We have been so jealous of your never staying in America long enough to make acquaintances. But it was clever of you. There is nothing like it as a whet to a jaded appetite. New York likes a man who can afford to turn his back on it—my New York, I mean, not the New York of philosophers and political economists. You see, you are not only an interesting personality, but a social problem. Your father's son and your grandfather's grandson belongs to us. We expect to be led by you some day soon, and are prepared to jump after you over any fence you elect to take."

"Great heavens! what have I done?" asked Adamson.

"It was done for you by your predecessors, who amassed a fortune that represents the highest American ideal of romance and distinction. Every people must have a sovereign of the imagination, and ours is enormous wealth. To dwell upon you and your doings will furnish amusement and recreation to hundreds of thousands of people who lead commonplace lives all over our country. As to the newspapers—"

"They will curse me from my eye-glass to my trousers, as Kipling would say."

"Or praise you till you crave a curse. You will be 'copy' for many a day to come, Mr. Adamson."

"Can you wonder, then, that I've made myself

scarce this long, when all I ask is to be, like my father before me, the most unassuming of private citizens?"

"But you can't, you see! You are of that magic 'third generation' from which all things are expected here. You are young, highly educated, have been everywhere, seen everything. You can't expect to slip into your father's groove. Why, the woman you'll choose for a wife will rise into a subject of national importance."

"The nation will have to look elsewhere for excitements, then. Really, you rob life of the few aspects in which it attracts me. The only comfort I have is that wise men have said the grandfather makes a fortune, the father enjoys it, and the grandchildren scatter it to the winds. Unfortunately, I am a man of simple tastes and modest ambitions. It's too bad, Mrs. Arrowtip, that I am destined to be such a disappointment to your community; but I can't unmake myself."

"Please don't," she said, casting an approving glance upon his muscular form and fine, straightforward face. "But dear me! here am I keeping you from all the other women who may want to know you."

"Nobody can be suffering from that complaint," he said, laughing. "Don't leave me yet, I beg. If you knew what a greenhorn I feel in a smart New York house!"

"Oh! but this is n't smart. The Hopes, too, are my cousins, so I can be frank and tell the truth. If you marry to-morrow and throw open that perfectly beautiful house of yours—which is already a pride to the avenue—your gathering will be distinctly smart.

This is a mixture of old and new, the gently decadent mingled with the conspicuously 'arrived.' I swing like a pendulum betwixt the two sets, looking on with an impersonal feeling at the passing show, and enjoying all that comes to me from either side. But my cousin, Mrs. Hope, has decided that she is aweary of the old, and means to go over, neck and crop, among the new. She wants to be taken out of humdrum. Her husband—bless his unworldly soul!—will never help her. Her boy is just as bad, and all depends, therefore, upon dear little Lucy, the most natural, artless, and unspoiled girl I know. Our *débutante*, for all she looks so childish, has studied, weighed, measured, and thought over many things. Then, she and her mother do not sympathize, and that drives her into taking up odd notions and attempting impossibilities. Look at her now, talking with Jack Warriner, who can't keep away from her any more than he can keep his feelings out of his face. It would be just like Lucy to take that cross upon her shoulders, and it would result in certain disaster. Bless me, I'm fairly maundering! Let me introduce you to Miss Lancaster—Miss Kate Lancaster—Mr. Adamson"; and she turned abruptly to two sister stars of fashion who were patiently stationed at her elbow.

"I have been coaching Mr. Adamson a little, girls, and now I must run away and leave him to you, for I've an early dinner on. You'll drop in some Saturday after five and let me resume my monologue, won't you, Mr. Adamson? It's the only way to prove to me that you have not been bored to death."

When Mrs. Arrowtip had taken her plain, charming face and striking figure away there was nothing left Adamson but to abandon himself to the current. In a short time he was surrounded, invited, flattered, reminded of "Tuesdays" and "Thursdays," and "almost any day, late," by at least half a hundred people whom he had never laid eyes on till that afternoon.

"I say, Rex, I 'm eternally obliged to you," began Jack, as the two men at last pulled out of it and started to walk up the ice-bound avenue in long, swinging strides. "Do you know, I 'm restored to grace, and all through your agency? Mrs. Hope beckoned me back just now to ask if you and I will dine there with a 'very few friends' on Tuesday! Since when have I partaken of bread and salt under that roof-tree? I was to engage you by word of mouth, as the notice is so short, and to let her know."

"Oh, I don't think so, Jack," replied his friend, shortly, then paused at the blank expression of Jack's face. "But, if you think it will be any good, I 'll show up, of course."

"It 's so hard for me to meet her, old fellow. Of course you can't understand my feelings, but it 's getting to be life and death to me to have these little glimpses of her. She can't understand, either. How should she—a girl like that? When I asked her in a whisper just now to meet me to-morrow in the street somewhere and take a walk—ever so short a one—she told me she would not do it—ever."

"Right she is," said Rex, feeling much embarrassed. He could not explain even to himself his feeling of rejoicing at the moral courage of the girl whom his

friend expected to make his wife—a girl who a couple of hours ago was nothing to him, and had suddenly become of such vast importance that in imagination he had constituted himself her knight and cavalier, to guard her from all evil and semblance of wrong-doing—to exalt her in other men's eyes, and keep her purity a thing enskied. Certainly he had no right to interfere—to preach to a man who had been so lucky as to win her love; but, knowing Jack as he did, the idea of connecting those two lives seemed abhorrent.

To relieve himself, he dropped into one of his silent fits, which Jack knew by experience were no more to be penetrated than a mountainous iceberg by a wave. They kept along together through an atmosphere clear as a bell, amid the hurrying figures of the great community at the end of a long day's work. Up above the housetop a new moon showed in an opaline sky. Far as the eye could reach ahead there was a seemingly solid mass of pedestrians, focusing on the sidewalks of the wide thoroughfare the life of the people among whom his lot was cast.

Their varied types and nationalities appeared to bring him in touch with those far places of earth whence he had come reluctantly away. Mrs. Arrowtip's shafts concerning his position and responsibilities recurred to him. If what she had said were true, he had too great a part to play in this world in miniature of latter-day New York to let himself be thus possessed by the double influence of a picture and a girl.

Before they reached the club where Jack turned in and left him, he had given the promise Jack desired.

III



THE days following his first meeting with Lucy Hope found Adamson desperately anxious lest something should intervene to prevent the dinner at her home to which he had been bidden. Remembering his first scoff at the invitation, he fairly trembled for fear fate would get even with him by putting it out of his power to go.

He did not yet quite realize that the door had opened for him into a new kingdom of delights and woes, that he was in the grip of the most resistless force of earth's experience. But he found himself dwelling on the girl's image, and was ever and anon thrilled by the sensation that had come to him—whether from her or from the old portrait he could not tell — that her face was linked to his destiny and was to become an essential part of his future.

When Jack Warriner, blooming with cheerfulness and health, arrived to go with Rex to the dinner, he was surprised to see on his friend's ordinarily self-contained countenance indications of an intensity of eagerness which he did not understand and was wise enough not to inquire into. Rex sprang into the brougham that awaited them with the light step of a school-boy. It was a long drive down-town to their

destination, and more than once Rex leaned his head out of the carriage window and chided the coachman for not taking streets less encumbered with the debris of the late snowfall.

Jack laughed at his companion's impatience. For himself, seeing that he had been that morning installed in the new venture in business which was to carry him to a respectable place in the community, an income sufficient for his wants, and, by a short cut, to the moment when he could openly claim Lucy as his affianced, the world seemed to be jogging comfortably enough. Even Rex, knowing Jack as he did, marveled at his airy indifference to the dark places of his past career, his sublime assurance that the gifts of fortune's cornucopia now being showered upon his head were merited, or at least nothing more than he might reasonably have expected.

They were first to arrive in the broad, old fashioned drawing-room, with the curtains of deep-red plush drawn together over its windows, book-shelves in the recesses on either side of a fire of large lumps of coal, vases of fresh flowers, and rather worn furniture in tint and texture like the curtains. The warmth and sparkle of this homelike interior seemed to Rex far more attractive than the bald upholstery and groupings of artistic furniture in his own home; for from the heart of its crimson glow rose to meet him a girl tall and fair as an arum, clad in white satin closely fitted to her perfect shape, her neck and arms bare, her face smiling, her eyes all unconscious that they "carried love."

The two men had but a word with her before others,

entering on their heels, claimed her notice. Rex, who knew not the art of looking happy when ennuied, stood around in a large, lumbering, and disconsolate way, waiting the summons to dinner, and admiring Jack Warriner's facility for appearing at his best at this critical moment when so much depended upon his taking a fresh start in the good graces of the Hope family.

Jack had selected for his opening shots into the fortress the person of a plain cousin from Mrs. Hope's native town, the success of whose social career in New York during her visit to her relatives was their unending care. To this pleasingly surprised young woman he now devoted himself without flagging, earning from the hostess, who had told him off to take her poor, dear Adelaide in to dinner, a warmth of regard long absent from her bosom so far as concerned him.

Rex, who had found out his own blessed fate in Miss Hope's name written on a card and stuck into a narrow envelop presented to him on arrival by the butler in the hall, did not scruple to stand back and desist from effort of any kind to be agreeable to others in the interim. Although conscious that he was a man of mark in this small, brilliant circle of opinion-makers and critics, he was by nature so devoid of ability to pose that he could not for the life of him feign an interest he did not feel in individuals.

He was not gauche, since conventional society of the highest accepted type in many other countries had already claimed him. London, Paris, Rome,

Cairo, the Riviera, had all stretched out their gloved right hands to welcome the heir of Job Adamson's millions. Dames of lineage longer than any America can show had signified their willingness to adopt him into the intimacy of their home life; and from the whole glittering galaxy he had escaped unscathed and indifferent. "A man's man," they had called him, settling down to find an excuse for this exasperating calm.

In secret he was trying to subdue the impatience that possessed his soul at the delay necessary upon the non-arrival of some missing guests; ready to murder two respectable citizens who, to dine in the Hopes' locality, had been obliged to drive down three good miles of the avenue. When the couple finally came in, the lady out of breath and flurried, the husband slinking behind her with a hang-dog air, both reiterating explanations that they did not yet know how to allow for driving distances in Greater New York, Rex Adamson felt a hot bound of the heart. He was now at liberty to go over and take a proprietary stand at Lucy's side. Directly, her hand rested like a snowflake upon his coat-sleeve, and they had fallen into line.

"I am rejoiced we are moving on—for you," she said mischievously. "I caught one glimpse of your face just now, and, as plainly as words could speak, it said, 'I'm simply ravening for my dinner.' Oh! don't protest. I feel for you—half-past eight, nearly, and you've probably had no afternoon tea. I mean, it's really cruel to men—working-men—though of course you're only a lily of the field—the way our

hours are arranged. Laurie comes in half starved at six, having had nothing but a sandwich or a plate of soup since breakfast, and then, if he's dining out, has to dress and speed miles away before he can get a mouthful at eight.

"He went to an eight-fifteen dinner the other night, where there was to be some electrical surprise in the dining-room to greet the guests as they went in. The electricity would n't work, a mechanic had to be sent for, the guests sat around in melancholy pairs in the drawing-room and talked more and more feebly until they were faint. Finally Laurie heard a man near him say to his companion: 'I'm awfully sorry, but when I have to wait for food it makes me positively savage, and drives me to wish to take people's heads off. So, if you don't mind, I won't try to answer you.' She cried out: 'Oh, I'm so glad! I was just thinking I'd hate you if I had to say another word.' Then neither spoke again. The company were just praying that they'd send around dinner-rolls or meat-lozenges—anything to save life—when, at nine, the dinner was announced. The result was, nobody looked at the pretty show of lights and flowers in the dining-room, everybody fell in an awful silence upon bread and raw oysters, and when those were consumed resorted surreptitiously to the side-dishes of little cakes and things."

"This is a proper rebuke for my stupid appearance. But my thoughts were guiltless of desire for food. The truth is, I don't know how to be pliant and appear unto men to be other than I am. And I was so awfully impatient to be able to take you in."

Never had a young sovereign of hearts a more spontaneous compliment. The frankness of it was, in Lucy's eyes, its most charming feature. She dimpled with satisfaction, and in the midst of this emotion caught a glance from Jack, who, with the plain cousin, had found places at the extreme end of the table, whence he could see Lucy only by dodging around a cluster of pink roses. Lucy shot back at him a brief answering look, so different in quality to the one just bestowed upon Rex that he, poor fellow, fell as if from a balloon to earth.

It was a girl's look she gave Jack, altogether maidenly, yet fond and trustful, as to one over whom she exercised a sheltering influence, in whose successes she rejoiced, for whose mischances she would always sorrow. But, as no language could have done, it convinced Rex of his own madness in yielding to the charm of the moment and forgetting why he had come into this house. Thenceforward Miss Lucy should have from him no more pretty speeches.

With a directness that was part of her, she spoke to him at once of Jack.

"If I had not heard of you from Laurie," she said, "I should have welcomed you heartily on Jack's account. He says I must trust you as his best friend—that without you none of this good luck would have come to him. When mama told me you were to take me in to-night I was delighted, Mr. Adamson. I was longing for an opportunity to talk to you about poor Jack. You can't think what faith I have in him. His is such a beautiful nature, so generous, so forgiving, so brave—and no one has seemed to un-

derstand him or to give him credit for any real purpose. But I do!" she added triumphantly, turning upon Rex her childlike gaze. "And you must, too, since you are his best friend. You and I must be friends also—must n't we? If I could only speak of him to Laurie, who's like my other self, it would be so good; but my brother holds back when Jack is mentioned; and as to my parents, they tolerate him only because of family ties. We are terrible people for family ties, Mr. Adamson. All of us make little shrines and burn incense to our own kin—though we do reserve the right of having little spats among ourselves. I don't think I could say how long ago it was I began to take Jack's side—long before he noticed me.

"We were at Newport one summer, and something had happened about Jack that I never could understand—no one would explain it to me. But the whole family sat around and looked gloomy, and hushed it up, and sighed when his name was spoken. That was the first time I felt that I'd like to stand up for him before the world. I just spoke out at table and said, 'He is a splendid fellow, and I'll never believe a word against him'; and then they scolded me, and I cried and ran out of the room. Last summer, when I met him in the country, I was almost in society, but he seemed to have just discovered my existence. It was rather mortifying, but—oh! I know you know the rest," she added, blushing to her hair. "He's told me you are his only confidant, and that I'm to look to you, as he does, for good advice. You may be sure I intend to do so; for sometimes I

feel so unhappy, you can't think. But to-night I am happy, because I believe it's all coming right at last and Jack will win the place he deserves, and everybody will see him as he is. And it's you we shall have to thank!"

Animating as she pursued her theme, fresh blushes deepening the carmine of her round young cheeks, her guileless eyes had sought his with an expression of gratitude and confidence that knocked at the very portals of his heart. Rarely had he been brought into contact with a girl so young, so absolutely without the art of concealing her emotion. The fervor of her championship for her lover had in it, he discerned, something of the spirit that would have prompted her to dash to the defense of a favorite dog set upon by others of his species and in danger of being overmatched.

Rex almost groaned as the conviction of her utter innocence concerning Jack's real self forced itself upon him. What manner of man was he to take advantage of it by coming into her home as a shield to their entanglement?

He tried to fancy his feelings toward one who would so act toward a young sister of his own.

"I believe I'd shoot him on sight, the rascal!" he thought, while turning aside, in answer to a movement from the lady on his left, to chat for a while with her.

Luckily this lady was Mrs. Arrowtip.

"I have been noticing that our little Lucy has had the conversation all to herself," she said. "You must remember that she's not only a type of the American young girl of gentle breeding in her primal freshness,

but a great darling in this household, who are in the habit of listening and applauding when she speaks. I'm afraid she'll lose that enthusiasm of temperament soon enough, but she is n't spoiled yet; and I find her a thousand times more interesting than one of those fashionable automata I most often meet, who look wan and lifeless before their time."

"You would have enjoyed a discussion to which I listened in the small hours at my club last night. The subject was, in sum, the check of old-fashioned courtship by the excessive artificiality of manners and customs here. Of course I took no part in it, but I received much light in my darkness of ignorance. It appears that some of the fair maidens of high society in New York are so hedged in by conventional rules, or so afraid of being mistaken for Daisy Millers, or what not, they go season after season unclaimed, if not fancy-free."

"That's just about what those men would be likely to think about it," said the widow, mockingly. "But I'll admit the girls and young men now seem to 'take their amusements sadly,' according to the standards of my day."

"By Jove, that's it. Several of the fellows said they had heard their fathers and mothers talking about certain conditions of—ahem—social intercourse between marriageable persons—"

"You render it in very noble language."

"Well, the amount of it was that there were lots more chances in those days for men and girls to find out they were in love with each other. The way it is now is more French than American, and we have

no fathers and mothers to put on white gloves and do the needful popping for a fellow."

"Poor, timid creatures! That accounts, then, for the extraordinary languishment of engagements in a certain set. The few the newspapers can get hold of are a perfect boon."

"Not entirely. The men I talked with claim that too much money on the girls' side and the lack of it on the men's are most common obstacles. And even a moderately well off fellow—one in receipt of a fair income earned by himself, I mean—dare n't venture to marry a girl brought up like one of those who think themselves specially fitted to take any rank that Europe can offer. How could he, without risking eternal smash in a year or two? The plain fact, Mrs. Arrowtip, is that ours is the most undemocratic, the most hedged in, little society of any capital I ever saw. And I judge only in the most superficial manner, from what I've seen here and heard said abroad. You know, I'm in every sense a new-comer."

"*Monsieur le bienvenu*," she said, bowing graciously, and making Adamson feel, somehow, immediately at ease. "You can't think how it interests me to get impressions at first hand from a man who has been bred abroad and has yet inborn sympathies with us. I wish you would tell me if your views chime in with mine in one particular. Are n't we—and our class, I mean—at this fag-end of the century, although in possession of material benefits undreamed of fifty years ago, wholly dissatisfied with our lot? I never see what I call a perfectly happy young face. It is their elders, who have learned to take life as it comes,

who seem more in tune with destiny. The young men—again I mean of our especially small class—appear to have no ambition to open the world's oyster with their swords; and the girls are restless, following out a hundred fads, yet doing nothing thoroughly. It makes me sigh for the old times of my girlhood, when we were a smaller band, more coalesced by common interest, more easily amused; the days when it was considered witty to declare, 'A man with \$500,000 is just as well off as if he were rich.'"

"I have heard my father say that my grandfather got hold of his first 'lump sum' by simply foreseeing that railroads were going to empty our West into European markets; and that when he got it he did n't know how to spend any more money than he was already spending. He could n't imagine anything else he wanted! Then our war came along and created a new era, when everybody's ideas blossomed out."

"And here we are on the brink of another war. Perhaps that's what we all need to clear the mental and moral atmosphere. But I hope Heaven will be merciful, and not allow our ideas of prodigality and luxury to blossom out any further as a consequence. There are aspects in which it might be a blessing. There would certainly be some call upon the tremendous physieal energies young fellows now waste upon polo and golf and athletics of all kinds, and it remains to be seen how they'll meet it."

"I hope not to be put to the test in that way," said he, modestly; "but I can fancy not holding back."

"If we get upon the subject of the De Lome incident, and the *Maine*, our friendship will be swamped. I can see that you're conservative, and, as I'm a terrible Jingo, we had better stop now. Do you observe the man on my other side, who brought me in? He and I have n't spoken for a year. They rented my cottage at Newport, and we had a difference about a dumb-waiter. If you wish to alienate your bosom friends, let them your house. They will attribute to your personal malignity every hole in the bottom of a saucepan, every dish smashed by their own domestics, and will not scruple to take away your good name by gossip about you. By some accident my card got into his envelop, and when he came to offer me his arm I knew his knees were tottering with fear. But I resolved to astonish him by my amiability, and have been so sweet that I fancy he'll want to rent my house again. However, I'll draw back before that crisis; but here goes to continue his bewilderment."

As she turned away with a comic arching of the eyebrows, Rex was at leisure to resume his study of his own particular comrade. Lucy's countenance, when she again bestowed it on him, was so striking a reproduction of the old portrait in the middle drawing-room that he could not resist again commenting on the fact, and in so doing felt a betraying tremor in his voice.

"Apropos of that picture, something very strange has come to my knowledge since I first met you," she said, speaking in a low tone. "It seems that your intuition about it had some foundation in fact. After

you were here I asked my father some questions about the 'Lady of the Duel,' and obtained his permission for the first time to overhaul an old box of letters, tied in different parcels with faded ribbons, which had belonged to the epoch of my great-grand-mama. I spent a whole rainy day absorbing them eagerly, but have been able to find no one in the house who has time to listen to my story of their contents. Now, be surprised! At the very end of the collection I came upon three of the sweetest, quaintest, saddest little letters, addressed to 'Mrs. Lucilla Hope,' and signed 'Eve Adamson'! You don't know how exciting this was to me. I read them again and again, but could not make out much. They were written in answer to some from Mrs. Hope, who was then living at Warriner Manor up the Hudson, an old place she had for life by her first husband's will. The subjects were principally health and children and current events,—the usual things between friends,—but in one of them Mrs. Adamson says, as nearly as I can remember it: 'If your good husband has not already enlightened you, let me disclaim any right to your too flattering praise by saying that what I have received from his family in the past is far more than God gave me strength to render him in return. Your friendship alone would have been rich requital, and I can only pray that this tie will be ever continued betwixt mine and thine!' She goes on to speak of her kind husband's prosperity in business; of her father's recent death; and of her three 'dear little boys,' who are 'passing delicate.' Now, won't you please lend all the powers of your

mind to finding out who 'Eve Adamson' was ? And I should be so much pleased if she were to turn out to be somebody of your very own."

"Do you mean it?" he said, with a thrill of pleasure ; "for she was, in fact, my ancestress."

"Oh, how nice ! for there are Jack and you and me brought together in this generation by hereditary right."

"Oh, yes, of course," answered Rex, rather flatly. "I had forgotten Jack's share in the combination."

"Why, he represents the villain of the piece. His ancestor challenged mine because they were both in love with the lady in the portrait, and mine got her. Just where yours came in I don't know, but we will both read up diligently and find out. Do you know, Laurie does n't care a bit for genealogies and by-gones ? He says those old people did nothing for him, and I tell him he 's more interested in what 's going on down-town to-day than in anything else in the world. Except one thing. Did you find out Laurie's soft spot while you were together on the voyage, Mr. Adamson ?"

"His sister?" asked Rex, smiling.

"No-o ; of course not ! What is a sister but a necessary incidental, to be walked over while a man lives at home, and forsaken just as soon as he can annex another fellow's sister ? Is it possible you did n't find out—knowing Jack so intimately, too —that Laurie is far gone in love with Bessie War-riner ? They can't call themselves engaged, because they 've nothing to marry on, and it 's awfully slow for Laurie getting ahead. But nothing would tempt

either one of them to think of another person, ever.

“Meantime, Mrs. Warriner and our mother preserve an armed neutrality toward each other—exchange visits, and pretend they never heard of anything between their respective treasures. Some of these days, when Jack’s and Laurie’s ships come in— Dear me, how long ships take to come in, don’t they?” she added, with a sudden change from gay to grave, heaving a little sigh.

Decidedly, Rex had never met any one who so combined childish artlessness with womanly intuition. He looked at her with reverence, and pity, too, resolving to speak no word that would shatter her young beliefs.

“Laurie’s ship will not be delayed much longer,” he said, chiming in with her fancy. “He is of the stuff that makes our successful citizens. I envy him his perfect adaptability to his surroundings, his contentment with his lot, and his quiet determination to push ahead. The short time that I have been at home trying to fit myself into my father’s affairs has convinced me that for a young man to be happy in New York he must have been born, bred, and educated to its exactions. Our town is a good mother, but a ‘stony-hearted stepmother.’ Imagine coming home from a long absence to find life here going on with the swing and relentless purpose of a huge machine, no one stopping or turning aside to do more than greet another in passing. If you idle, you are scorned as a cumberer of the earth; and, indeed, if you so much as pause by the way to wonder at cer-

tain existing defects in legislation, or monopolies, or chicanery in commerce, your fate is sealed. You are a snob, a carper, an unreal product of your native soil. I refused to converse with a man yesterday who swooped down on me to participate in what I took to be a rather disgraceful business scheme; and he went off warning me that I am already spoken of as a degenerate scion of my father's house. If they would only give me time to get my breath! Your brother, on the contrary, is 'inside.' He knows it all, can draw conclusions at his ease, and need make no mistakes. Depend upon it, it is he, not I, who may be looked on as a patriotic prop of the twentieth century. But this is not dinner-table chat for a young lady in her first season."

"I can see you are in earnest, so I like it!" she exclaimed candidly. "The idea of putting my poor dear Laurie's prospects ahead of yours is most amusing. Why, to hear women talk, you are—but I won't turn your head. I want your best judgment to keep Jack up to the mark, as he has begun. Don't you really think, Mr. Adamson, that Jack has one of the finest minds you know? He could do anything, if he only got started right. And now you have started him, all will go well; I am sure it will. I want some day to be able to exhibit Jack triumphantly to the unbelievers of my family as a steady, hard-working business man. Then you and I will secretly rejoice and plume ourselves, won't we, Mr. Adamson? Do you know, it is so nice having some one to whom I can talk about poor Jack!"

Jack, always Jack! Adamson, while wincing, bore

it manfully. It was better that he should be kept in mind.

When they left the table and the men adjourned to a smoking-room up-stairs, Laurence Hope joined Rex and took him off to a quiet corner where they could talk undisturbed.

Lucy's second hero was a tall, open-faced youth, without his sister's glowing beauty, but like her in going straight to the point when there was anything on his mind.

"I saw you talking to my sister at dinner, Adamson," the young man said, without affectation; "and knowing that you are friends with Warriner, and all that, I think it only fair to suggest to you that I hope you won't encourage her in her delusions about him. How far they've gone I don't know; but I do know that if my father suspected what I do he'd be likely to order the door shut in that man's face. As matters are, we being old friends,—and part relations, I believe,—it's very hard to draw the line against him. The fact that he's always fascinated silly women makes me sick when I think that she may be fancying herself taken with him. I had n't seen them together for ages till to-night, when, by George! I saw a look passing between them that choked me. Adamson, I could n't rest till I warned you. I felt sure, from her face when she was talking to you, that he was the subject. There's more than one reason why the matter's as difficult as a hedgehog for me to handle. I can't go to him, as I would to another fellow of his stripe, and tell him my plain opinion; and I can't inform on him to my father, still less set my

mother on the scent. I ought rather to protect him, and let him reap every benefit on God's earth that 's likely to come to him from this chance you 've helped him to get. But put yourself in my place, and say if you would like your sister to—a girl of nineteen, who 's been shut in like a nun—oh! it 's impossible, intolerable, and I can't even ask you to condemn him! Perhaps I'm wronging you in suggesting that you would voluntarily let her run upon this snag. If you suspected anything, you could hardly—Adamson, this is n't the place for such a talk, and I 'm in my own house, while he 's my mother's guest; but you and I know Jack Warriner down to the ground, and you must believe that I 'll fight the world rather than let him get her."

Adamson, who had listened without stirring to the young man's rapid, excited speech, tried to weigh well the words in which to answer him.

Thus pondering, he looked Lucy's brother full in the eyes.

"Oh, I say — it was brutally rude of me to do this," went on Laurie, before the other man could speak; "but I don't think I was ever more boiling angry than this idea has made me; and I had to speak it out. It is n't square to ask you to turn on him here, now, under these circumstances. I beg your pardon if I 've done a rather nasty thing. I suppose it was realizing what kind of a fellow you are, and knowing that you 'd stuck by Jack as man to man, without considering the things that have got to rule me, that made me pour it out on you. No,

don't answer me; not a word; what I've said I've said, and please consider there's an end of it."

"If there were n't all these other people looking on I'd like to shake hands with you," said Adamson.

And then Mr. Hope, senior, came up and dropped into a chair beside the young magnate, whom he had decided to be a very interesting *fin de siècle* study; and Laurie took his pangs and fears away.

IV



RS. HOPE'S large, old-fashioned drawing-rooms were again thrown open to her friends. This time the occasion was a sewing-class of an unusually interesting variety.

It was not one of those opportunities to discuss the fate of nations and the faults of man to slow music and slower recitations — when night-gowns and petticoats for the infant poor lie prone across silken laps while conversation quickens in the air, and when the hour of parting scatters to their carriages devotees bearing off unfinished tasks to be concluded by their maids at home.

In the morning sunshine, streaming through windows that looked out on a pleasant square, were gathered fifty or more matrons, assorted in age and size, but distinctly of the chaperoning, dinner-giving set. From tables piled with neat rolls of flannel a few organizing spirits were distributing to applicants, as they came in, the abdominal bandages prescribed by medical authority for the use of soldiers in a tropic clime. Equipped with one of these to hem and supply with tapes, each lady took her place in the group of friends found by her to be most congenial. Here were no languorous needles seen. All

was industry, and the swelling chorus of chat was charged with an unwonted note of gravity in face of the possible issue of the struggle for which they were thus beginning to provide.

The great wave of popular resentment that had swept over the length and breadth of the land after the catastrophe of the *Maine* had been met in a more hold-back spirit by New-Yorkers than by their brethren of the West and South. In clubs and dining-rooms, down town and up, the matter was discussed incessantly but with conservatism—especially by the elders of the community.

They did not yearn for a war with Spain in behalf of suffering Cuba. To their minds, it looked as if the starving *reconcentrados* would be all in their graves before the American troops could be fitly prepared to fight their battles. They were not sufficiently worked up to righteous indignation against the oppressors of their neighbors to crave sacrificing to it the health and lives of their own beloved sons in the pestilential climate of a Cuban summer. And—perhaps—they were not satisfied that their leaders meant to carry on the war solely for the benefit of the downtrodden race of aliens, and without ulterior and selfish purposes.

But everywhere in the great cosmopolitan city impetuous youth had arrayed itself against experienced age. No memories of the awful war between the States, that, even at this late date, had still potency to grip the heart and chill the blood of those who grew up amid its dread realities, could dissuade a younger generation eager for a new fray at arms. While to all the armories of the National Guard were

trooping applicants for admission to the ranks, young fellows with whom their parents and kinsmen were exhausting deterrent influence went about looking sore and sick at heart with hope depressed. And among girls, whose knowledge of what war may be was a happy blank, were rehearsed eager expressions of sympathy for those would-be warriors. They could not understand—why should they?—any reason in the attempt to curb a martial spirit, to condemn a young man's pride to bleed at home, instead of allowing him to take the risk of sacrificing his life among comrades in the field.

And, as usual, the young element overpowered the old. The inevitable of history was accomplished. The stir of the country at large reached the secluded homes of the wealthy residents of New York, to find them ready at a touch to yield up their best. Money flowed like a river to establish an Ambulance Corps and Red Cross auxiliaries. Young men who were idling abroad came home, zealous to enlist as privates in the ranks of the avenging army. Gently bred women and girls stepped forward to offer themselves as nurses and hospital attendants, however humble in capacity. This was no child's play in the name of patriotism, but self-sacrifice of the sort that effectually tests the souls of people.

The vote of Congress, early in March, to appropriate fifty millions of money for national defense startled every one, even to the last unbeliever and scoffer, into realizing that war was at least in view.

What a strange cloud hovered all that spring of 1898 over a community seemingly unchanged in its

performance of the usual functions of every day! People went on dressing, dining, theater-going, speculating, money-making, wrangling about politics or religion, abusing each other in print, taking thought for the morrow of their business and pleasure—trying all the while to ignore the fact of the coming crash of armed conflict.

The one outward visible sign of anxiety was eagerness to devour and digest, if possible, the repeated extras of the daily press. At all hours of the day and night were these disturbers of the peace, with their giant head-lines and gory imprints, brought into homes and read between heart-beats. But until April was well advanced—nay, until the day the wires flashed to a waiting world the final refusal of Spain to withdraw her troops from Cuba at America's demand—there was always room for hope that the disaster was not to come!

Thus may be explained an apparent levity in the earlier attitude of many New-Yorkers regarding the situation. They were like children who had played at wolf till they feared no longer, yet would have been glad to put an end to the awesome sport.

Mrs. Hope, one of the directors of the sewing-class here convened for special patriotic work, did not, on the bright day of April when they met at her residence, look as complacent as when we saw her previously in the season. It was evident that her cup of personal anxieties was overfull, and some of her more intimate acquaintances had shrewd suspicions as to the cause. To-day, when she was brought into the very focus of public observation, many speculations

were hazarded as to the cause of her evident disquietude of spirit.

"It is all very well to put it down to her son Laurie's being likely to go off with his troop," said a lady in a group remote from the hostess's position by the table. "That's bad enough, as nobody knows better than I, who can't sleep for thinking of my boy in the Naval Reserve."

"Of course the navy will have to bear the brunt of it. It will be a sea-battle, my husband says, short and sharp; and that will be the end. But one is always hoping the whole thing will blow by. They do say," she went on, dropping her voice while threading a gold-eyed needle, "Elizabeth Hope has discovered an attachment between her idol, Laurie, and little Bessie Warriner."

"And you think that's all? Is it possible you have not heard of the story that's just come out about Lucy and that good-for-nothing Jack?"

"No. What? Anything very recent?"

"Yesterday, only, it got about. I'm sure all the others here are whispering about it, so why should n't we? The affair between Laurie and Bessie does n't count in comparison with this other business."

"Oh, tell me! Please don't delay."

"My daughters heard it at their Red Cross meeting, yesterday," put in an important-looking dame, while the first speaker remained in an agony of suspended curiosity. "No one knows exactly how the facts got out, but it happened at the —— Club, where both young men belong. Laurie Hope had some words with Jack Warriner, and, it is said, ordered him

not to come near this house again. Jack went off in another one of those terrible drinking-fits, and told everybody in hearing of his engagement to Lucy," whispered the happy informant. "I see Lucy's not down-stairs to-day, so it must be true. It appears the child is infatuated with Jack, and they've been engaged for months. Should n't wonder if they had her stepping out of the house, some fine day, and getting married to him in seeret. Well, there is some excuse for a little young thing like that losing her head about such a perfectly handsome man. But you remember, my dear, that affair at Newport several years ago—and other things. Oh, no; he's no husband for a nice girl; and besides, they'd starve in a year, at best."

"Too bad! too bad!" commented the important-looking dame, radiantly. "I always tell my girls these young women who are set up for professional beauties invariably make the worst matches in the world. Everybody knows, too, that Mrs. Hope made a tremendous attempt to catch young Adamson for her daughter when he first came home. I'm told the young man—who, dear knows, is exceedingly snubby, and has no manners that I can see—saw through her in a minute, and simply stopped coming to the house. No inducement could bring him here now, they say."

"Don't talk to me about young Adamson!" exclaimed the third lady of the group, stopping to hold up her half-completed garment with an improving air, and interpolating: "I'm giving my best herring-bone to the poor, dear volunteers. A more spoiled,

uppish, uninteresting creature than 'Rex,' as the girls call him, I've never seen. A complete disappointment to society. I pity the woman who gets him for a son-in-law; and his wife will always have to dance round to the tune of his exactions. I can fancy him brutal, if his temper were roused. I told Mrs. Warriner long ago, when she was credited with wanting him for Euphrosyne, that my child would n't take him for a gift. And what good does their wealth do him or the public? He spends nothing on himself or anybody else."

"The papers this morning say young Mr. Adamson will offer his splendid new yacht as a gift to the Government before it's been put in commission—and I know of a lot of big charities that he's given to most liberally," said a quiet spinster sitting by, who had caught the final clause of the other's speech. "It seems to me he has a very unusual sense of the duties of a multi-millionaire. He does not succeed in making friends with his followers generally, that's clear; and then, consider how many he's had to snub."

"Oh!" answered the important lady, huffily.

Temporarily silenced, she soon returned to the charge.

"Poor Mrs. Hope! She looks twice her age to-day. Such an effort as it must have been to push Lucy on this winter, and the girl absolutely ungrateful! I'm struck more and more with that idea of her running off with Jack Warriner and getting married on the sly. Since you suggested it, it has grown upon my mind."

"Then at the next sewing-class it will probably be circulated as an accomplished fact," remarked the quiet spinster, with an innocent expression.

"I don't know what you mean," replied the important dame, freezingly, turning her back to pursue her utterances before more sympathetic hearers, but judging it wiser to refrain from further reference to the Adamsons and Hopes.

"I had a letter from my niece, Lady Clevenden, to-day. She is having the greatest possible success, and is in the smartest set—not the Queen's, of course.

"Do you know, I've written to my agent that I'll not occupy my country house at all this summer? It is so near the coast, I should think it in the highest degree unsafe. I should never trust those Spaniards not to bombard us without mercy, if their squadron should come in there. Even Newport's in danger, so they say. And to think how civil people were to those bloodthirsty wretches only a few years back. Treating their Eulalia as if she were good-looking!

"Imagine any one having the heart to throw shells among the lovely houses and lawns on the cliff at Newport! My husband? Cured by absent treatment, my dear; not a doubt of it, though our family physician came three times a day. I think we should, before all things, be broad and accept the new ideas. Did you hear that Mrs. Midas has cut down her ball-and-dinner-list to fifty? Says she can't visit more than that number; and not one of them has less than ten millions. I'm told it's a fact. She's been making up tremendously to young Adamson; and if no duke presents himself for Miss Midas, perhaps young

Adamson will be made to do. The conceit of Elizabeth Hope—thinking she was going to get him for poor little Lucy!

“I really pity these people who fancy they can keep up with society on the strength of a few rusty old grandfathers’ portraits on the wall—and the Warriners are worse even than the Hopes. Well, I’ve finished my stint, and must go. Thirty to luncheon to-day—all the frumps and people I used to know before we moved. Kill all my birds with one stone, as I told my husband. My chef, who is the most appreciative creature, understands things so thoroughly that he brought me two or three of his second-class menus to choose between for this lunch. How tender it makes one feel to think that the work of one’s fingers is going to be worn by a soldier boy battling for Cuba Libre! I’ll just slip out this door without letting any one else see me, so good-by!”

“Insufferable woman!” observed the quiet spinster to the two ladies remaining, who were naturally not averse to hearing their late comrade disposed of. “She is a bundle of pretenses, eaten up with petty ambitions that are not gratified. Her sole claim to public notice is her money.”

“Oh, she will get there! She is on the way,” answered the busy worker with the gold-eyed needle. “That enormous new house has turned her head, as they generally do at first. But she’s more sure of herself than she used to be, or she’d never have ventured to pick holes in Elizabeth Hope. Last year she hung round the Hopes’ necks and toadied them no end, because they stand for the old régime. There

comes Lucy at last—pretty creature. But dear me! she looks very sad. I should n't have known the child."

Poor Lucy! While her affairs were being thus arranged for her by the *voces populi* of "polite" society, she was moving about the room very quietly and graciously, greeting her mother's friends, and, as quickly as might be, sat down under the wing of Mrs. Arrowtip, who had tact enough to make no comment upon her evidently nervous and overstrained condition of mind.

After Lucy had stitched vigorously for a while upon the girdle of a brave defender, Mrs. Arrowtip took the opportunity, when a friend on the other side had turned away, to look again at the girl; and then addressed her casually:

"What was it this morning, Lucy? Slumming or calisthenics, drawing or Red Cross? You girls are so taken up with occupations, one never presumes to think of you as idling like the heroines of old, who remained for hours in contemplation of a rose."

"I've been doing nothing better or worse than listening to the sorrows of the housemaid," said Lucy, trying to speak lightly. "I found that little rosy German girl mama got last dissolved in tears because her sweetheart is in the National Guard, and he told her last night they expect soon to be ordered to the South, to prepare for Cuba. I had to convince her that the war is not on yet. Mrs. Arrowtip," she added in quite a different tone, "I want you to do me the greatest favor in the world."

The two sat apart from the others, and as Lucy spoke Mrs. Arrowtip moved her chair into the bay-window, pretending to need more light, and signaled her to follow.

"There, now no one can hear us. What is it, my dear?" she asked, cheerfully.

"I suppose you know—everybody seems to know—that Laurie and Jack Warriner have had a quarrel about me."

"Dear, dear! these irrepressible Warriners and Hopes!" answered Mrs. Arrowtip, letting her gaze rove to the portrait of Lucy's famous ancestress, the "Lady of the Duel." "Why can't they desist from it, I'd like to know?"

"Nothing can come of this but misery to me," said the girl, drearily. "Laurie found out from me that I promised to marry Jack some day, and, after speaking to me as I never supposed he could speak to the sister who loves him so, went off and told Jack that all must end between us on the spot. Then he came home again and told my father and mother, and—and—"

"Take care; don't go on till you can control your voice. Should n't you think our soldiers are all to be Daniel Lamberts, the size they have cut these things? And what man's going to stop to tie tapes? A good, honest pair of safety-pins would be better. Now you are all right; go on again, little girl."

"They sided with Laurie, and it was terrible. No one told me anything but 'it must be' or 'it must not be.' Even papa said, 'Believe me, you will thank us for this one day.' Now, I submitted when it hap-

pened, night before last; but since then I have made up my mind to a different course."

"One moment, my child. How did the story get abroad?"

"I don't know," answered Lucy, artlessly. "Of course Laurie did n't speak of it, and of course Jack would be too proud, even if he did not wish to shelter me. Oh, Mrs. Arrowtip, if you refuse to help me, I don't know where to turn. I must see Jack once more and say good-by to him. He can't come here, and I've no place where I could meet him, if I would. It is so strange he has never written me a line or sent me a message, when he must know how I have suffered! Tell me the truth; *do* you think they—my people—are doing right?"

"I'm afraid I do, Lucy. But don't enter upon that part of it. It is too much of a tax on your self-restraint."

"Poor Jack! The whole world is his enemy!" exclaimed Lucy, keeping back her tears.

"Poor Jack! He is his own worst enemy!" said Mrs. Arrowtip, firmly. "Lucy, this had to come; and my sorrow is that you must bear it by yourself. I know what you want me to do, dear, and I'll try to gratify you. When I go home from here now, I'll send off a messenger with a note to Jack telling him that you will be with me at five o'clock, and that I rely on him as a gentleman to come there only to say good-by. It may n't be wise, but I'll risk it."

"Oh, how *dear* you are, Mrs. Arrowtip!" exclaimed the child, fervently, a gleam of the old-time joy com-

ing into her eyes. "I believe this will almost crush him, coming just when he had made a new beginning of his life. But poor Jack never has other people's luck. Even this new business has not proved exactly what he hoped. There has been something—I don't know what—that has gone against him. Once or twice he did not come here when he had promised to, and when I saw him again he did not seem quite—quite—himself. I've half suspected, once or twice, that his friend Mr. Adamson has not kept his pledges to him."

"Put that out of your mind once and for all, my dear," said Mrs. Arrowtip, "for I have been seeing Mr. Adamson pretty steadily. We have many points of common interest, and I begin to know him very well. I think the best thing about Jack is the way he has kept Adamson's friendship. Adamson has been literally a rock for him to lean upon."

"Then why did Mr. Adamson behave so oddly about giving me up?" exclaimed Lucy, vigorously. "After dining here that night long ago, he just left cards at the door, and never came again. If he had been Jack's friend he would have wanted to see more of us. You can't think how it has hurt my feelings; it seemed almost a rebuke to me for my forwardness in letting him know so much, on a first acquaintance. But it was because there seemed so much in him for me to trust. Then, too, I had found an old letter that appeared to link us together, and—and—oh! I was dreadfully disappointed in Mr. Adamson!"

"Keep to your first intuitions, my dear, and they will guide you right. For my part, I can't imagine

any one more to be trusted than he. But surely you 've met him since?"

"Oh, yes! in an unsatisfactory sort of fashion. Once he took me in to dinner at the Langleys', and talked almost entirely to the girl on his other side. I may as well tell you the truth. I was not only puzzled, but piqued. I wanted him to like me for myself, as well as because Jack had chosen me. I even went out of my way a little to try to get him to do so. But he would n't," she added in a melancholy tone.

"Don't waste yourself in any further speculations, my child," said Mrs. Arrowtip, gravely. "As matters stand, I can only thank Heaven that circumstances, even before your brother's manly action, have kept you and Jack Warriner almost continually apart."

"You too, Mrs. Arrowtip?"

"Yes, I too, little Lucy. But let us talk no more of this. Come to me this afternoon at five, and I will be with you while he says farewell. Under those conditions only I consent. Now, dear, slip out and run up to your room. Your eloquent face is beginning to show too plainly what we are talking about. If I could only solve the mystery of how Laurie's talk with Jack at the club had got abroad—"

"Laurie believed no one would know of it except ourselves," said the girl, piteously. "And surely my parents never would—why, mama can't have any idea that the affair has been talked about!"

"No, no; there is another reason—pray Heaven it may n't be what I fear: that Jack himself betrayed

their secret, in his cups," her collocutor thought, though she said nothing.

Prompt as she was kind, Mrs. Arrowtip sat down before eating lunch and penned a note to the scapegrace.

A little later an envelop was put into her hands, containing Jack Warriner's card, across which was penciled, in wavering characters: "I ought not, but I will come."

At five, Lucy, pale, a little frightened, but resolute, arrived in the drawing-room of Mrs. Arrowtip's tiny dwelling, where many a time of late Rex Adamson had sat, unburdening himself to its owner of thoughts and feelings of which he could never before have deemed it possible to speak. Whether or not Mrs. Arrowtip suspected his state of mind toward Lucy, and the real reason for his keeping away from the Hopes' home, she was not yet assured of it.

While sitting there waiting for Lucy she could hardly restrain a whimsical burst of rebellion against fate for failing to decree that Lucy and Rex should have met before Jack had claimed the homage of the girl's imagination.

Hereafter, with Adamson's admiration for Lucy held forcibly in check and Lucy's heroic notions of remaining true to the memory of her first love, the whole thing would be warped and might never be straightened out. How tiresome lovers are! Mrs. Arrowtip did like Rex Adamson. He was so all-deserving of a good wife. Lucy was of the kind to love a man for himself, without reference to fortune,

and how hard this was going to be for Rex to find elsewhere!

But concerning the depth and permanency of Lucy's love for Jack Mrs. Arrowtip was beginning to feel uncomfortable. She was afraid the girl would hold on to the idea of him till other opportunities had drifted down the stream, till the best years of her life were spent in clinging to a false ideal. Such things had been—might be. She recalled what the girl had said about consoling the little housemaid.

What was that saying of the dear old autocrat? "A real human heart with divine love in it beats with the same glow under all the patterns of all earth's thousand tribes." A tear came into her eyes. She, too, had felt that "divine love," and lost it many years before. She must curb her clever tongue, and be gentle with Lucy.

"My dear girl," she said, rising to kiss her guest, "he will be here; but remember, I can give you no more help with him than this. I think it is, before all, your duty to let him go, and I believe you will not fail. No, don't answer me. Only believe that I love you and would spare you if I could."

Not feeling in the mood for speech, they sat down in silence, one on either side of a miniature table draped in convent lace, on which a silver kettle bubbled cheerily. To make time fly, Mrs. Arrowtip busied herself with her tea-making, urging upon Lucy a cup, which was at once put down with its contents untasted. Moments that seemed hours passed before a sharp ring was heard, and then Lucy sprang upon her feet with an electric thrill.

"Courage, Lucy," she heard in her friend's clear, softly modulated tones.

But at the man's step in the little hall Lucy started in dismay, exclaiming: "That's not he! Oh, I must go out! I can't see any one but Jack!"

Before she could cross the threshold to retreat through the back room the visitor came in. It was none other than Rex Adamson.

He looked sad and stern. His face wore an expression neither woman could fathom. It was almost that of shame.

Bowing to Mrs. Arrowtip, he went over at once to arrest Lucy, who stood half withdrawn in the shadow of the portière through which she had meant to vanish.

"Don't go, please. I have a message for you," he said in the low, concentrated tone that "holds passion in a leash." "And I don't think I ever had one that cost me such pain to give."

"He is ill?" she cried, her heart beating with dull foreboding.

"No; not ill, only—not fit to be here. Indeed, I believe he meant and desired to keep his promise to come to you, but—it is far better that he failed. He asked me if he should, and I told him it was better not."

"But I don't understand," she answered, in pained bewilderment. "It must be something—oh, Mrs. Arrowtip, he won't speak; you must tell me what this means!"

"It means that the man you have thought you love was never worthy of you, dear," said her friend,

coming behind her and putting an arm round her shoulders, "and that Mr. Adamson naturally hesitates to speak words that will tell you the necessary truth. Jack, kinsman of mine though he be, Lucy, is a confirmed drunkard and *débauché*. How could those who love you trust you in such hands? No matter what he swears to you, he will never have strength to keep it."

"Oh, don't!" cried Lucy, bursting into tears. "I can't listen! It is too dreadful—too treacherous to him! How can I believe you when I have never seen him other than as I know him? Is n't it enough we should be parted, without having my life darkened by such cruel slanders against him? And from you, Mr. Adamson—who call yourself his friend!"

Rex Adamson's face grew very pale.

"You leave me no alternative," he said, taking out of his pocket a crumpled scrap of paper, "but to give you this, which I had hoped you might be spared."

Lucy tried to read through her tears the rough scrawl in Jack's familiar handwriting, that yet did not seem his own. When she could decipher them, these lines seemed to blaze upon her sight:

It is all true what they say of me. I have gone under again—this time degrading you. After Laurie left me, I drank myself mad and told every one our secret. Don't waste your sympathy. I am beyond the pale. But I don't bear Laurie any grudge—if it had been my sister I'd have done the same. But for the man who will give you this, I believe I'd shoot myself now, and end it. I shall never want to meet your eyes again. Forget me, and, when you can, forgive.

When Lucy looked up from her long and bitter sobbing she was alone. Presently Mrs. Arrowtip came back and soothed and kissed her; but neither of them spoke of the contents of the note Lucy had cast into the fire.

V

“AURIE! Laurie, I say! Wake up, dear!”

There was a gasp, a stir, a floundering under a warm cover, and then a pair of blue eyes opened in a sunburnt face and gazed wildly at the speaker. Laurence Hope became aware that his mother, in dressing-gown and slippers, was standing beside his bed.

A little while before she, too, had been lying comfortably enwrapped, for the time oblivious of a fear that had scarcely left her since the spring set in. Into her slumbers had come the strident summons of their front door-bell; again it sounded, and she only of the household was broad awake.

A glance down from her window into the street revealed a diminutive telegraph-boy, in a blaze of electric light, holding the usual yellow envelop. While instinctively reckoning up the quarters whence bad news might come, she hurriedly made ready to go down-stairs and take it in.

Under the hall lantern the mother read an order to her son to “report at the armory at once,” signed by the captain of the troop of the National Guard in which Laurie had been proud to inscribe himself a private.

Since before midnight these telegrams of command had been speeding everywhere in the twin cities linked by the Brooklyn Bridge, in pursuit of husbands, brothers, sons. Clubs, theaters, ball-rooms, homes, hotels, and lodging-houses were invaded by the fateful missives. What though the summons meant no more than a test of the readiness of volunteers? It was the first actual touch New York had of the rude red hand of war!

"My tired boy!" thought the mother. "He has been working so hard at the office all to-day; I thought his foot lagged as he went up to bed. If it could only have been to-morrow!"

"Laurie, it's a telegram from your captain," she said in a trembling voice. "They want you at the armory at once."

"Yes, mother. Ten minutes, and I'll be down."

One grievous, long-drawn yawn, a last tribute to the sweet slumber from which he had been so rudely torn, and the young man was alert and eager to be off. Of small account seemed to him the comforts of his home, the bed soon to be exchanged for a truss of straw on the wet ground of Hempstead Plains, the surroundings of civilized existence to be cast away for life in a tent!

He was conscious only of an intense desire to go, that made him hardly patient with the yearning solicitude and repressed gloom of the family now aroused and in action to speed him on his way.

Although for days past every necessary preparation for a call to camp had been made, though a valise in waiting held all and more than the minor equip-

ments for field service a pack of saddle-bags could possibly be made to contain, there were still services for loving hands to render the soldier they were sending to the front. Sandwiches were cut; a flask was filled with the best brandy in the house. Lucy, in her pink peignoir with the floating laces, a coil of red-brown hair loosened and tumbling down her back, bent a grave face over the woolen socks she had been marking with Laurie's number in the troop. His father, half dressed, must needs see if the boy had in hand enough money for immediate use. The servants, in scant attire, fell over each other in their zeal to perform some ministration for the new son of Mars. And amid all this bustle, instituted to work off the family depression of spirits, the trooper descended among them, his lithe figure clad in fatigue-jacket and trousers of dark blue, a wisp of yellow stuff knotted around his bare throat, booted and spurred, gauntlets in hand, and in his eyes a light that rebuked the dull aching of their hearts.

"What, mother and Lucy? Afraid, are you?" he cried, "and not a Dago nearer than the Caribbean Sea. That's a fine way to send me off, is n't it? And no doubt I'll be sneaking home to-morrow, instead of going into camp. Hang these eternal delays of the powers that be! All I mind is this getting you good people out of bed at this unearthly hour."

He kissed them both, shook hands with his father, and sped away light-footed, to be carried up-town on a neighboring elevated railway. When the front door closed upon her son, Mrs. Hope vanished, her husband following to give her such reassurance as he

might. Lucy, left alone, ran to a front window, thinking to catch a last glimpse of Laurie, and hoping he might look up.

She was just in time to see her brother met upon the steps by a tall man in evening clothes, who, grasping him by the hand, hurried off in his company, their steps ringing through the quiet of the street.

"Which of his fellow-troopers can it be who lives near enough to call for Laurie?" she wondered. "That back does n't look like Dick Masters, but I suppose it's he, rushing up to dress at the armory. Dearest Laurie! How his friends love him! and who could help it? I'm glad he's got Masters, to make it jollier for him. Why—it's *not* Masters—it's—"

She drew back quickly. Just as the two retreating figures came under the glare of an arc-light they had turned and were looking back at the house. Laurie, seeing his sister, waved his cap with an old, familiar gesture. And Laurie's tall comrade, who had also caught a fleeting glimpse of the pink vision at the window, stood bareheaded in full view. It was Rex Adamson.

Lucy had never seen him since the day of their poignant interview in Mrs. Arrowtip's little drawing-room. At that time she had felt, indeed, that she never wanted to see him again. A great wave of shame and grief and misery had swept over her head, and she had emerged from it sore at heart, believing that happiness was not for her again. Her pride had bled that Rex, in whom she had confided her innocent trust in her unworthy lover, should have

been the one to witness her downfall of faith and hope.

Later she had realized the infinite gentleness and chivalry of his attitude, but not at first. She had allowed him to see the revulsion of her feelings; had thrust away from her by a gesture and a look his eager proffer of service. And she had seen him gather himself together and retreat with dignity from the attempt to be anything further in her life. As far as she knew, he had given her up once and for all.

With her father's and mother's consent, she had written a final letter to Jack Warriner, definitely sundering the bond that had been between them. This missive, carried to her father in his library and laid before him silently, had been read by Mr. Hope with the expectation of finding much to criticize, to restrain, and to advise to have rewritten. But after submitting it to his wife, who perused the poor little heartfelt scrawl with frank tears in her eyes, he had handed it gravely back to his daughter, and bade her send it as it was.

Everybody at home had been dearer than ever to her since then, thought Lucy. They had forgiven her concealment of the affair with Jack, had sympathized in deeds, not words, with her plucky fight to keep up, and seemed now to be holding her more closely to their hearts than ever. Even Laurie, from whom in the course of their lifelong intimacy she had rarely had a melting word, had spoken with her briefly, but feelingly, concerning her hapless love-venture and his own share in bringing it to wreck.

Dear old Laurie! He had acted according to his best sense of protection of his only sister. She could see that in every line of his face, when he broached the painful subject. For his intervention had cost Laurie dear. That Jack was his Bessie's brother had but made his position more distressing.

Since the event, Bessie had sent for him and told him that, in view of the new rupture between the families, and the exposure of their affairs to the gossips of society, her mother had ordered her to give him up. So Laurie, too, was cut adrift from his first love. He had confided this fact to no one save his sister. If his mother suspected it, she did not know. Only Lucy knew how gladly her brother had answered the call to march away to war.

Amid these troubles of the Hopes and Warriners, Rex Adamson had not been forgotten by either household. Mrs. Warriner, with whom he had a painful interview, had thanked him fervently for standing by her unfortunate son in the scandal brought upon them by Jack's most recent fall from grace.

As a first consequence Jack had withdrawn from his club, where his resignation had been accepted without a protesting voice. A few days later the great business venture, in which he had embarked with all sails set and colors flying, came to an end in a fierce quarrel between the partners, Jack's senior refusing utterly to put up with him, and the firm dissolving by mutual consent.

Jack, stalking out of the office in a blank fury with his associate, had yet controlled himself suffi-

ciently to arrange for the return to Rex Adamson of funds embarked by him in their enterprise. And after that no one knew where to find our poor sinner. Another star had vanished in the black abyss.

Laurie Hope had meanwhile grown into closer relations of friendship with Adamson. Every day he had had something new to report to the home people concerning the quick progress of their intercourse. Mrs. Hope, who a little while before would have welcomed this alliance with delight, now, broken in spirits by Lucy's misadventure, remained passive when her boy quoted Rex. She was hardly even moved to comment when Laurie, coming in one evening, announced that Adamson had been taken into his company of the troop, the fellows rejoicing to secure such a stalwart new recruit. But Lucy's eyes had flashed quick approval.

"That is fine!" she cried, with the old enthusiastic ring in her tones. "I am glad you have him for a comrade, and I hope it may be a tent-mate."

That night, on going to her room, Lucy took out the old letters of Eve Adamson to Mrs. Lucilla Hope, and read them with new light. Was it not being answered through Rex and Laurie, the century-old prayer for a continuance of friendship "betwixt mine and thine"? And she had often read them since.

This matter of Rex calling for Laurie at such a late hour of the night afforded her subject for the liveliest speculation. It was most likely that the summons had found him at a certain supper given, in their neighborhood, by an officer of the National Guard to

some of his fellow-volunteers. Rex, knowing Laurie to be at home, must have come a little out of his way to pick him up *en route* for the armory. But why, seeing the house lighted on every floor, had not he rung boldly, and asked for Laurie, instead of hovering outside?

Ah, me! She would have liked to give him, as well as Laurie, a God-speed. Her heart warmed at the notion of their setting off side by side. Rex, by inheritance one of the princes of the earth, wrapped in the purple, putting it all away to serve as a private in the ranks! What a dullard she had been always to treat him as the friend of some one else,—Jack's first, then Laurie's,—never as one deserving honor because of his own strong manhood and individuality!

The last resolution of her mind before she sank into belated sleep was an ardent determination to do Rex justice for the future. It seemed vain for her to dwell on it, but there was no doubt he had lingered a moment looking back at her window after Laurie had pressed ahead. Little did she know that, driven like a leaf before the blast, Rex had come there, not in search of Laurie, but making that fraternal act an excuse for a last glance at the house that enshrined his ruling power before he could answer his country's call to arms.

HEMPSTEAD PLAINS in May! A stretch of rolling downs in the middle regions of Long Island, open to the full sweep of breezes from the Atlantic. What vernal promise in the description! How could our volunteers do better than rally there for their pre-

liminary training? One pictured, on first hearing of it, a canvas city of snow-white tents pitched amid spring blossoms carpeting the hollows, and watered by rivulets coursing to the sea! A pleasant change, truly, for city-bred and city-pent youths! So thought most parents and proprietors of the nation's defenders then hastening to their baptism of fire.

As a matter of stern fact, there was no romance about the famous site selected by the paternal government at Albany for breaking into military life the thousands of young clerks, professional men, and mechanics taken out of their stove-heated homes and steam-heated offices or factories; men who had hung up their overcoats, rolled their umbrellas and shelved their rubber shoes, and left them all behind at home on the day they went into camp!

It began raining soon after the place was chosen, and continued to rain for not quite forty days and nights, but long enough to cover the whole extent of even that gravelly soil with thick mire, thoroughly to saturate the troops, their tents, and their belongings, and to subdue the spirit of the most ardent patriot to the level of grim endurance. These men, who had stepped so gaily out of civil life, were suddenly, without preparation, subjected to the test of sleeping on wet ground, living in wet clothes, eating food soggy with the water it had been cooked with, and at first, through a refinement of mockery, having no water to wash in and almost none to drink.

After the camp had been established these facts were evident to visitors from town, and there was

despondency in many a home. It was only the men themselves who made no moan.

A Long Island train going away from New York, one morning when lightening clouds gave hope of a day less drenching, carried a small party of intending visitors to Camp Black, consisting of Mr. and Mrs. Lucien Hope, their daughter, and Euphrosyne Warriner—the latter dressed in garb rigidly simple and suggestive of her calling as a trained nurse.

Euphrosyne had always kept friendship with Lucy, despite the recent break between their families on Jack's account. She considered herself emancipated from ordinary social laws, and had touched Lucy's generous heart by her high-minded grief over the affair—coming in person to lament it, when Mrs. Warriner's other daughters obeyed their mother's stern fiat of withdrawal from any intercourse with the Hopes.

Nurse Warriner's present outing was in order to get a glimpse of life in camp, after offering her services to the government. Lucy had an idea that a sight of his lost love's sister would cheer Laurie, who, however, since the enforced parting from Bessie, had given no sign to any one of his feeling on the subject. And then, Lucy had much in common with Euphrosyne just now. She had lately been visiting her at St. Jude's, trying to familiarize herself with details of attendance on the patients. Her secret longing, little suspected by her parents, was to follow Euphrosyne's example and volunteer as a war nurse.

Sitting opposite them in the car, the two girls had

espied a rusty little man in shabby clothes, bent in the shoulders and buried in a newspaper, which he read without looking up till the train slowed at the station for Camp Black. While the Hopes were in the act of engaging the last unoccupied vehicle, a mud-bespattered old carryall with raw-boned horses and a decrepit driver, they saw their fellow-traveler looking about the station in an absent-minded way, apparently much at a loss as to what he was to do for a trap. Lucy called her near-sighted father's attention to the fact, and Mr. Hope, with his usual courtesy, made the stranger an offer of the unused seat in theirs.

"I 'm obliged to you, sir. If it won't incommode you, I 'd be glad to take it. I am going to visit my son," he added in an impersonal tone; "and I guess I forgot to telegraph ahead."

As the rain began to fall anew, Lucy, in deference to the stranger's age, insisted upon placing him in her own seat next Euphrosyne, and sprang lightly up to the more exposed perch beside the driver. On the way to the camp her spirits rose with the thought of meeting Laurie; her cheeks glowed in the moist air; her hair, under the same influence, broke into little fantastic rings on her neck and forehead.

While the others yielded themselves more or less to the depressing nature of the experience, while the wheels sank hub-deep into watery ruts and the horses strained to perform their task, her lively sallies and charming looks put heart into every one. Even their dry old nut of an extra passenger relaxed now and again into smiles that wrinkled his thin cheeks.

After plowing ahead for a weary length of time, they came abreast of the camp of an infantry regiment of greenhorns from the interior of the State. Uniforms and tents having proved insufficient for their numbers, many of these men, still wearing their ordinary citizens' clothes, were seen either miserably congregated under the shelter of rubber blankets, or else exposed to the rain without so much as an overcoat or poncho. A sentry in check trousers, a water-logged jersey and a derby hat, walked on his beat before the dismal throng.

"Oh, do go on, driver!" exclaimed Mrs. Hope, turning away her eyes. "I never dreamed of anything like this."

At every step forward the sad impression was deepened, with fresh revelations of inadequacy in provision of the most ordinary comforts for the volunteers. No outcast dog could have fared more pitifully than these ill-equipped regiments, hurried on from their native towns or country-sides amid the cheers of sympathetic crowds gathered at every point along their route.

Under a thin veil of gray drizzle, all the encampments wore their most melancholy aspect; but Mrs. Hope could not but feel that her own boy's comrades, representing the wealthy and well-bred families of their community, and possessed of abundant private means, must be found in better plight.

When, finally, the driver reined in where he had been told to stop, in her disappointment she gave a little cry of dismay.

"Oh, Lucien!" she exclaimed to her husband,

woefully. "It can't be here! Surely it is n't here!"

"I 'm afraid, ma'am, you 'll find it is," said the rusty little man, turning around and speaking to her for the first time. "I 've been before when 't was worse than this. But the boys will cheer ye up!"

They had halted at one end of a row of large conical tents so sodden with moisture as to resemble structures of wet paper. In and out of these lurked a few stray figures, but the chief animation visible was over at the far end of the line, where a curl of blue smoke announced the quarters of the cook.

The inclosure behind which that potentate stood, amid his pots and kettles bubbling on iron grills above pits full of burning logs, a mere counter of rough boards, was the only mess-table this crack organization could boast of. Thitherward the visitors could now see trooping a procession of animated scarecrows—phantoms in blue overcoats, with collars raised and tails flapping around booted legs, their campaign hats with the brims turned down to shed the rain, carrying each a tin cup and plate and spoon to receive his rations. It was hard to detect in them the flower of New York's fashion, the habitués of clubs and opera-boxes, the leaders of cotillions, and former targets for newspaper squibs calling them effeminate and brainless fops!

At a little distance off, horses in canvas blankets were picketed to a rope, tails to the storm, and turning their heads from side to side in a vain search for an avenue of escape from the downpour of the skies. Shelter the poor beasts had none. A long pile of

saturated straw was their bedding, and a kind word and pat from their masters at feeding- and watering-time the only consolation of their days and nights. If ever the outlines of animals grouped together conveyed a meaning, theirs was a protest against the taking up of American arms for Cuba.

Up and down the length of his beat before the tents paced a sentry in draggled blue uniform, his musket trailing, his aspect as forlorn as that of any tramp that ever asked for alms. When the carryall had come to a full stop, and he approached them to challenge their business at the camp, Lucy innocently cried aloud:

“Why, Mr. Percival!”

She had recognized in him a young man of her acquaintance, a whilom frequenter of gay society, whom she had last seen coming toward her at a ball, carrying a favor of ribbon and tinsel, and asking her to dance.

The sentry saluted, but did not relax official severity. He called up the corporal of the guard, another old friend of the Hope family, who, after stolidly undertaking to summon Laurie to his parents, inquired of the stranger on the middle seat whom he would like to see.

“Private Adamson. Tell him his father, please,” was the brief reply.

“Mr. Adamson, I beg your pardon!” said Mr. Hope, astonished, like the rest. “But for my poor sight I should have identified you before. Although we have never had a personal acquaintance, I know you, of course, as everybody else does. My name is

Hope, and as our sons are friends and tent-mates, I am doubly glad we had this opportunity to bring you over."

"Pleased to meet you, sir," answered the magnate, graciously; "and I take it very kindly of your young lady to have given me up her seat. Bad business, this rain, for our men in camp."

While the elders talked, Mr. Percival, just then returned after relief from duty, devoted himself to the general enlightenment of the girls. His tongue, to avenge itself for previously enforced restraint, now wagged industriously.

"So that 's Rex Adamson's father?" he asked, lowering his tone. "I could tell him that his son is over behind there digging a trench to bury the garbage from the kitchen; but I don't know how he would take it. We like our digging-bees better than sitting in a wet tent 'polishing brasses and cleaning boots on such a fine spring day as this. I can't ask you ladies to get out, since there 's not a spot to be discovered as dry as the shelter of your carriage. You 'll find Laurie fit as a fiddle and jolly as a sand-boy, Miss Hope. He and Rex are in my tent—that one next the last in the row; and if we do scrap sometimes when the ten of us have to fit in it like wheel-spokes, of a night, we have lots of fun."

"That—that dingy, dripping rag? Laurie—you all—sleep in *there*?" exclaimed Lucy, horrified.

"Indeed we do; and if we only had a board floor we 'd be proud as Punch. Here comes Laurie to tell you all about it. They 've caught the lad in the act of loading his plate with pork and beans, and

he 's bringing it along. If you 'll excuse me, Miss Hope, I 'll run to get my own grub, and join you again presently. We can't afford to stand on ceremony here, where the food fires are the only ones that burn."

He ran off laughing as Laurie joined them. Mrs. Hope, giving one glance at her drenched and mud-bespattered offspring to be sure she had made no mistake, leaned out and threw both arms around his neck in a fervent hug. Regardless of the rain, she and the girls presently sprang down and surrounded Laurie, who, in famous good spirits, poured upon them a flood of merry chat. So absorbed were they in hero-worship of their own, they did not notice the arrival to greet his father of Rex Adamson, whose great frame, in his working-shirt, and trousers tucked into his boots, was literally caked in mud, his arms bare, a spade still in hand, his face ruddy with health and satisfaction.

Mr. Adamson took note with a twinkling eye that his son, in passing a corporal, had received orders of some kind from that functionary, who happened to be a petty clerk in a bank with which Job had much to do. He was pleased with the whimsicality of the incident, and determined to have an eye on the young man on his return to civil life.

Job was feeling passably cheerful on more than one account. To begin with, he had attended, before taking the train, a directors' meeting, where the sum total of their fees of what should have been a ten-dollar gold piece for each member of the board had fallen, by regulation, to be divided between himself

and the only other director present. The consciousness of these unexpected yellow boys jingling in his breeches-pocket was a distinctly satisfying one. And, next, he had been decidedly struck by the revelation of blooming young womanhood in Luey Hope. It was long since he had taken notice of a pretty girl's back hair, or had been dazzled by the apparition of a rosy face, bright eyes, and gleaming teeth. He recognized Miss Euphrosyne Warriner, although she had failed to identify him. He had once seen a photograph of her belonging to his wife. And, dried-up old specimen though he was, Job had inwardly confessed the attraction of beauty to be something superior to mere worth. He was very glad "Mis' Adamson" had n't succeeded in introducing Euphrosyne as a permanent member of his family while there were such "pretty ones" as Luey still unwed. Lastly, Job had a piece of news for Rex that he relished, while hesitating to communicate it. A telegram had come to him that morning from Washington with regard to his late offer of a contribution to the emergency funds that exceeded in amount the yearly revenues of many a monarch, and a letter had reached him from an old friend high in authority in government saying that his son Rex was about to be appointed to a post on the staff of a leading general.

Job knew that the appointment antedated his offer to the government; but he was sure, also, that Rex would fight against the appearance of buying his promotion, or of being exalted so early in the game, before he had done anything to deserve it. It was going to be a deuce of a struggle to get his son and

heir out of this mud-hole—a fact in which Job felt a sense of secret pride that Rex had never given him in all his life before.

When Mrs. Hope announced that, rain or no rain, she would not go back to town without seeing where her Laurie lived and slept, and the party set out under umbrellas to pick their way over to the tent, Lucy found herself bringing up the rear in company with Rex, Euphrosyne and Laurie having a little talk apart.

Lucy was struck by the bright and hopeful look on Rex's face. Always heretofore she had fancied it wore an expression of uncertainty whether or not life were worth living. Now, though unseemly in appearance, dirty, tired, and hungry, he was distinctly in tune with fate. He told her cheerily of their military ups and downs, hardships, amusements, jokes, and quarrels; then the by far harder experience of the men of some of the regiments. He described how their tent, owing to a friend of theirs who smuggled it in to them, had one day enjoyed champagne enough to wash in, but no water; how, sickening of *pâté de foie gras*, they had fed it to their horses, sighed for a slice of hot roast beef, then adjourned eagerly to "salt-horse" and army bread.

To all of this Lucy listened fascinated, fixing her eyes upon him with enormous pride in her privilege of walking beside this glorious muddy being the length of the camp before the gaze of men who crowded out to meet her and tried to get her away from him!

They found Mrs. Hope peeping between the dog-

eared flaps of "Laurie's tent" with a truly woebegone expression. The floor—the ground itself, covered with wet straw under rubber blankets—was littered with novels, pipes, cards, tobacco, tins of biscuit, fruit, and empty bottles of suggestive hue and shape. Every available space was filled with reeking garments, stacked arms, and wet boots. Fast asleep upon his back, with his feet to the tent-pole, lay a big trooper snoring off the previous night on guard. Over his massive bulk his comrades had scattered American Beauty roses—the contents of a box sent to him by a fair friend in New York.

"Makes a decent corpse, does n't he?" grinned Laurie; but seeing his mother's distressed face, he promptly carried her away to visit the cook and inspect the commissary supplies.

"Thank you, oh, thank you!" Lucy was saying to Rex, when it was time to go. "I shall always remember this, and be grateful that I was permitted to have sight of a little, though never so little, of your and Laurie's hardships. And it was *so* good of you to let me taste your pork and beans! I liked them—really I did; and your bread was excellent. I'm sure you must get sick of all that fancy stuff friends send you in boxes from town. Oh, I wish I were a man! It must be grand to be banded together here, enduring things."

"Yet my father wants me to get out of it. He has just told me that my promotion is on the way. Now judge for me, Miss Hope. I told you, a moment ago, why I hesitate to take my rise. If you were in my place, would you go and be a bloated staff-officer,

with insignia of rank on your collar, and have all the world say you owe it to your father's money, or would you stay here and dig trenches for the cook?"

"Do you really mean me to decide it?" she said, blushing a little.

"No; that would n't be fair, when I've already made up my mind. But I'd dearly like to know if you agree with me."

"Then—for the present—I'd stay here," she said.

"That 's exactly what I mean to do. And I'll promise you I'll look out for Laurie, and keep him from getting homesick, and see that he takes those quinine capsules your mother gave him."

"Oh, will you? How good!"

"Yes; you know, there is something behind us three that should always keep us friends."

"'Betwixt mine and thine'?" she asked, dimpling.

"When you said that, you were the very image of the portrait. There; everybody's in the trap but you and my father—who has taken the greatest fancy to you, by the way. All those other fellows look as if they would chew me up for monopolizing you. Good-by, then. What do you say to our having a little sort of watchword between us, in token of our friendship? 'Betwixt mine and thine,' for instance?"

"That 's the very thing. Whenever I say that to you it'll mean that I exactly approve of everything you've done; and *vice versa*. Don't tell Laurie; he would laugh. And I do hope I can get to Camp Black some day when it does n't rain."

Euphrosyne, with a subdued sigh, made place beside

her. Long ago resigned to Rex's indifference, it yet cost her a pang to see Lucy with him. Lucy looked back at him standing like a monolith where they had left him. Her heart warmed even to the dried-up Job, who surprised them, on arrival at the station, by having the directors' car to meet him, and inviting their party to share its luxurious interior, with afternoon tea served by an accomplished steward as they sped through a dripping landscape back to town.

VI



ONE Sunday afternoon late in May, Brooklyn Bridge and its approaches at the westerly end were crowded with a solid mass of people who had been waiting there for hours.

In the street leading across to the Jersey City ferries some cabs and private carriages containing well-known heads of the community were lined up along the curbstone. But, for the most part, men and women of all conditions were mingled afoot in the restless, pushing throng. The great railroad kings and financiers, judges, lawyers, surgeons, clergymen, with their wives and daughters, were hustled by East-Siders who had brought their families to see the show. As usual, the East-Siders had the best of it, monopolizing the advance-lines of the sidewalks. and stationing their women and children upon boxes, carried for the purpose, exactly where the meek-spirited grandees would have to crane their necks to peep between.

It was long after the time fixed by the newspapers for the probable arrival of the two troops who had been marching along country roads from camp, and the day was drawing to a close, when a stir and a thrill along the lines of weary watchers announced

the end of their ordeal. With the resulting forward movement of the crowd, a lady with a young girl in attendance was pushed irresistibly forward upon a party of three people standing against the railing of the footway, and overlooking the northerly road of the bridge, in an excellent position to view the pageant when it should pass by.

There was a protest from the lady, around whom a protecting arm was thrown by the girl, but in vain. Mrs. Warriner and her daughter Bessie were forced into closest quarters with Mr. and Mrs. Lucien Hope and Lucy, between whom and themselves no word had passed since the break after Jack's last downfall.

To Mrs. Warriner this unlooked-for accident was especially distressing. How could she allow her whilom friends to suppose she had brought her child there for a last sight of their son Laurie going to the war, because Bessie had pined and moped after him until her mother's heart could no longer bear the strain of it? And this, following the way her unhappy Jack had treated their Lucy, and the pain and misery that had ensued for all concerned! There was not, alas! for the Warriners the excuse of coming to see off a son and brother.

Jack, far away somewhere in the South, had simply written them that he should volunteer in either the army or the navy, and try to wipe out his disgrace. It was not for his mother to look her last upon his bonny face beaming with patriotic zeal among his comrades as they passed!

The poor lady, wrapping herself in her tatters of

pride, saluted her old friends coldly, then looked away on the bridge without speaking. Mr. and Mrs. Hope, in spite of their good reasons for resentment against Jack's family, were struck by the wan and forlorn look upon Letitia Warriner's face. They bowed in return, without giving her evidence of unkind feeling. Indeed, their hearts were too full for anything but thinking of their own boy.

Lucy, at first sight of Bessie, had started, drawing back as if from a touch on an old sore. She had not yet put Jack out of her thoughts; and Bessie's face was his, softened into girlish tints and contours. But in an instant the pang had subsided and the tenderer thought of Laurie had taken its place.

She had at once divined what her father and mother had been slower to penetrate: it was, indeed, for a glimpse of her banished lover that little Bessie had broken bounds to come here. And before either girl knew how it happened, they had kissed, and were standing, palpitating, hand in hand, in front of their elders.

This was no time for resentments and old feuds. A common current of feeling swayed the multitude when over the big bridge, riding in a column of fours, with a rhythmic clatter of hoofs and a jingle of accoutrements, came two troops of cavalry, covered with the dust of their all-day march from Hempstead, every man of whom had some dear one belonging to him in the crowd.

Off for Cuba!—as they thought and hoped! Fine, soldierly figures, bronzed by the sun and toughened by the privations of their hard month at Camp

Black, sitting their saddles with the ease of old campaigners, each man carrying in pack and saddle-bag his worldly all, save for the carbine, sword, pistol, and canteen that hung about his body.

Their ride through Long Island had been accomplished under just such conditions as the present,—everywhere shouts and cheers and cries to individuals,—and now the greeting of the foremost troop was to be intensified in volume and in feeling. They were passing their nearest and dearest. Hardly a trooper of the lot but had turned his back upon the comforts, even luxuries, of a home near by, and was interrupting for the cause a career well begun in civil life, if not sacrificing a future of brilliant promise.

Then the cheering swelled into a roar. As familiar faces began to come into sight, the two girls, Lucy and Bessie, leaned forward, utterly oblivious of the rest of the crowd, to search the column with straining eyes. And Laurie, riding with Rex, Percival, and another man, was presently upon them in almost the suddenness of a surprise.

Laurie, by good luck, was nearest them in the column. As he took in the unexpected juxtaposition of his father and mother and Mrs. Warriner, standing behind Bessie, who held Lucy's hand, his face grew radiant. Mrs. Hope, accustomed to read her boy's countenance like an open page, saw at once what he supposed to be the case. And with a quick impulse, her whole yearning heart in her gaze, she gave him the assurance he craved by throwing her arm around his Bessie's shoulder.

"God bless you, mother!" he said in a low, happy

tone, riding so close that he seemed almost within reach of Bessie's hand, where he would have left the flower from his hat-band. Next, in the momentary pause of the column, delayed by some obstruction farther forward, his eyes sought Mrs. Warriner's. She, too, was smiling approval through her tears. In that moment who could refuse a trooper anything? Her heart was melted to her girl, her rancor gone. Laurie, glowing with triumph, rode away as the column moved again.

Lucy, absorbed in a brief, sudden pantomime that meant so much to her brother's peace of mind, did not at first observe that the trooper next Laurie in the line was gazing at her as if he could not see enough. When they had almost passed, she perceived Rex and waved to him—and wished she had done more.

And that was all of it.

Another troop, in the same column of fours, followed theirs, and soon the last rider had gone by.

Amid the tramp of hoofs, the rattle of metal, the wild cheering of the crowd, the cavalry had disappeared; and in many a woman's heart light was succeeded by eclipse.

That night, when they were brought to a halt in the Jersey City stock-yards, preparatory to taking train for the South next morning, Laurie was put on guard duty, and Rex, who had obtained leave to go home for a few hours to make some last arrangements, had a little talk with his friend.

Laurie, who had neither envelop nor stamp, charged him with conveying in safety to Miss Bessie Warriner

some disreputable-looking loose pages of foolscap, procured from a sympathetic cattle-man, on which he had scribbled in pencil upon his knee. Rex, promising that this token should be in the young lady's hands before she slept, went, as he was, to deliver it at Mrs. Warriner's apartment—conscious that a more played out and unseemly looking object than himself had rarely touched the bell at a lady's door.

The elevator-man who had assisted his progress into the upper regions of the house where Mrs. Warriner abode—a colored gentleman of exclusive tastes, and already very tired of the prominence given in polite circles to these shabby bluecoats—had treated him with scant civility. The heir of the Adamson millions, the prospective owner of that famous mansion facing the park to which Rex would presently return for a bath and brief sleep, had had to grovel before this haughty darky for permission to be conveyed up to their floor to inquire whether the ladies were at that late hour still visible.

A like fate awaited him at the hands of Mrs. Warriner's trim little white-capped maid, who could n't understand what such a shabby figure of a soldier would be doing there at ten o'clock at night. She decided at once upon a scolding for the negro for allowing him to come up; though while she was reiterating with testy emphasis that she could on no account disturb her young lady to speak with him, relief came in the person of Euphrosyne Warriner, who was at home for a night or two before setting

off on her service in a military hospital on the far Southern coast, and now stepped out into the little vestibule. She led Mr. Adamson within, sent a summons to Bessie, then said in a hesitating voice:

"If it's a message from Laurie Hope, I think I should tell you there's some one else here who would wish to hear it. Lucy has been spending the evening with us, and is in Bessie's room talking over their exciting day."

The start Rex gave was confirmation strong of Euphrosyne's suspicions since their visit to the camp, and for one moment this young woman, to whom it had been allotted to find her joy only in others, service, felt a throb of envy at Lucy's happy lot.

It had at no time been Rex's fortune or position that had attracted Euphrosyne to him. Long ago she had cared for him for himself, and now the fulfilment of his stalwart manhood had more than justified the promise of his youth. If she had longed to nurse the soldiers, it had been her hope and prayer that, should Rex need her, she might find her way to him. She even felt glad to think that Mr. and Mrs. Hope had denied Lucy the privilege of going with the Red Cross.

But, swallowing her emotions, she went out of the room, quickly returning with both Lucy and Bessie, who bestowed on the caller a welcome so warm that his steady brain yielded to the sweet influence, and he lingered talking for an hour. Long after Lucy's maid (who had come for her young lady in a cab) had been announced, he sat there, hardly realizing that Euphrosyne had gone off to talk with her mother,

and Bessie to read her letter again and again, and pen an answer to its raptures.

How precious would ever be to Rex the memory of this unlooked-for last talk with the girl he loved! Though she would never know it, should he go down in battle, hers would be the last image on his mind.

If he was tempted to tell her so, now when everybody's heart was on lip, belief in her continuing interest in poor, wandering, outlawed Jack restrained him. Seeing her here amid Jack's family seemed to make her more theirs than his. He would not open her wound anew by letting her know of his.

Yet, how he longed to take with him only one of such words as Bessie was pouring out in unstinted measure to her Laurie! If it might have been!

Crushing down these thoughts, he told Lucy of something concerning which it had been his intention to write to her from a distance. A little time before, in looking over an old family Bible of his father's line, he had come upon a half-sheet of paper signed by his father's grandmother, Eve Adamson. Upon this was written a request to her survivors to seek out some opportunity of restoring to the descendants of "Captain Laurence Hope of Warriner Manor" a certain sum of money given to her by Hope's parents and later invested by her husband in certain city lots, which she described.

"The whole thing was so informal and impalpable, so evidently a rough draft only of expression of an idea she meant to elaborate, that I had great trouble in following it up. I got my father's leave to do with it what I like, and for some weeks the investi-

gation has been pushed hard by my lawyers. I should tell you there is no legal claim upon my father in the matter, and that if it were brought to your father's notice he would probably pooh-pooh me for an impertinent fellow. But I have traced the thing to this conclusion: the city lots in question, over on the East Side, adjoining what was once a farm owned by Luke Watson, our ancestor, are still in our possession.

"They do not amount to a king's ransom in value, but the sale of them would bring in a sum that might help out Master Laurie in his future housekeeping,—you see, I am counting on our safe return,—and so my father has promised to have them transferred to Laurie's name. I want you to promise me that you won't speak of this to any living soul till time shall straighten out the snarl of the war. I can't tell you what a pleasure it's been for me to do it."

"It's like a fairy-tale!" cried she; "and Laurie knows nothing of it?"

"Nothing!"

"It is much too much for you to do for him."

"Remember, 'betwixt mine and thine,' Miss Hope. That idea of the old tie between our families coming up again, and being strengthened, even in this small way, appeals to me tremendously. Some day, if you'll let me, I'd like to follow up these clues by reading the letters of Eve Adamson that are in your possession."

"We Hopes can never do enough to show our gratitude to you Adamsons, if you carry out this wonderful new plan. You have taken away my breath. That

sweet old Madam Eve seems to be our good genius, and I can't tell whether it is she or you I must thank for Laurie's sake."

She held out her hand with a charming gesture of good will.

"Thank her, then, if you must!" he exclaimed, lifting her hand to kiss it. "But don't altogether forget her descendant. I'm staying an unconscionable time, Miss Hope. But when I think that it's my very last chance of a talk with you—"

"Oh! but you had to wait for Bessie's letter," she exclaimed, blushing.

Lucy could hardly believe in the transformation of his face and manner. Something of this he had shown in their first meetings, and the memory thus evoked brought with it the inevitable one of Jack. The answering glow in her own face and manner was chilled, and a sigh escaped her lips.

Rex sprang upon his feet, clinking his spurs, standing erect and self-conscious, his own emotion checked, his hour of dalliance over. A carpet-knight was he no longer, but a soldier on the way to the front. Then Mrs. Warriner came in, with Emily, who said small and civil things to him about the coming campaign, the hardships of the camp and march, etc.; and at last Bessie appeared, fetching her long letter to Laurie—after which he had no recourse but to take his leave.

Then Bessie led Lucy back into her little sanctum. By a common impulse the two fell into each other's arms and relieved their surcharged feelings by what girls call a "good long cry." Bessie stopped crying

first. The idea of Laurie tramping up and down on his beat in the Jersey City stock-yards, thinking about her, was a beacon in her darkness.

Mrs. Warriner, of all the friends who had shared in the emotions of the little episode on Brooklyn Bridge, remained longest keeping vigil that Sunday night. The true and brave son she had gained was nothing by comparison with the dear sinner she had lost. Wherever Jack might be, whether couched on the ground under the stars shining upon a Southern camp, or afloat in the bowels of a big battle-ship, there was her faithful heart. The girl he had loved and ill treated might learn to forget him and choose another in his place; the sisters who had cherished and shielded him might be weaned in time from his memory; but the mother, never on God's earth!

WHILE Laurie Hope and his other brothers in arms were still in a home camp, eating their hearts out with the desire for action, Rex Adamson, appointed to the modest position of second lieutenant in the Regular Army, had been transferred to an infantry regiment ordered to Santiago.

It was not his luck to be in the fight at Las Guasimas on the 24th of June, but he heard from a dozen sources of the distinguished valor shown that day by dismounted Rough Rider Jack Warriner, who had gone through it with the dash and light spirit he would have put into playing foot-ball at college or polo at Newport—barely escaping death once or twice, and emerging from many perils to

receive promotion from his leader, together with the brief speech of approval that Roosevelt's men craved as English soldiers covet a V. C.

Rex had met Jack once, and exchanged a handshake with him afterward; but the toil of getting files through that underbrush from Siboney to Santiago, in heat like the blast of a fiery furnace, made men forget everything but what they saw on either side of them, and what they hoped to do ahead.

IN the forenoon of July 1 two badly wounded men were panting, gasping, one stretched half across the body of the other, on the slope of San Juan Hill, that had just been carried by the American line. It was an officer of infantry who lay underneath; the one pinning him down wore the garb of the Rough Riders.

Corporal Jack Warriner had seen his friend, Lieutenant Adamson, fall, and found him shot through the shoulder, bleeding and helpless. While bending over, trying to give him the little water he had, Jack was himself hit by a bullet across the back, that struck the spine. The high, harsh grass wherein they lay closed around them, and no relief had yet come their way. To torturing thirst under the glare of a merciless sun was added the ever-increasing distress of their enforced posture. They had spoken to each other, and were wondering when the thing would end. When Jack found that Rex's voice was giving out and his breath failing under the weight, he envied him his prospect of dying first, but determined, nevertheless, to make one final effort to relieve the situation.

"If I could move—I think—you 'd have a better show," he said, "and I 'm—going—to—try!"

"No, no! For God's sake, don't! It 's only—holding out—a little bit longer—for the two of us. It must end soon."

"If there 's a chance for either, you ought to get it; so I 'm going to try," repeated Jack, gathering his resolution.

"Jack!—dear old Jack—don't! I—"

"If you see her—" began Jack, but stopped. He knew that he must save all his strength for the physical struggle of moving his shattered and numbed body. Even the resolve to do this had brought out a thick sweat upon his forehead. Then he tried, with the one arm of which he had some control, to lift himself, and, with a groan of anguish, failed. But he succeeded in giving a trifle of relief to Rex.

"No more, Jack. That 's all right. I tell you, it 's all right," Rex said.

"Yes—it is all right now," he heard Jack whisper; and then there was another wrench, and by a supreme effort the thing desired was accomplished. The body of the Rough Rider rolled off his friend, and Jack lay dead beside him.

By the time Rex fell into the hands of the surgeons he was too far gone to know anything of what was passing.

But in the second stage of a long ensuing illness, in a rude little military hospital in the hills near Santiago, he found his father at his side. He was fairly convalescent before they ventured to tell him that Jack was at rest under a soldier's monument—a

couple of sticks in the form of a cross—pending an opportunity to send his body home; and that poor Euphrosyne, after a career of self-devotion to the fever patients in the hospital where she had been detailed as nurse, had herself succumbed to the yellow scourge, more fatal than Mauser bullets, and was also buried in Cuban soil.

ONE beautiful soft day of autumn, when the Highlands of the Hudson were garlanded in many-colored leaves, a handful of friends gathered around the newly opened vault in the Manor graveyard where Jack's forebears had for several generations been entombed, to commit to their final resting-place the last of the male Warriners and his heroic sister.

The two coffins were covered with one flag, and upon Jack's were placed his old trooper's hat and gauntlets, while Euphrosyne slept under a mass of white roses. The short military service was soon concluded. The echo of the volley fired after the coffins were carried in had been taken up and repeated gloriously by the hills round about; and then a bugler sounded taps.

Rex Adamson, gaunt as to person, hardly filling his uniform, his face white and lined with grief, gave his arm to Mrs. Warriner; the sisters, Job Adamson, Mrs. Arrowtip, and the Lucien Hopes gathered in the background. Her parents had asked Lucy not to be present, and Laurie was away in a distant camp, having not yet resigned from the Volunteer Army, in which he had received a commission as captain in a staff department before the occupation of Porto Rico.

FOR months after this pathetic reunion of Hopes and Warriners and Adamsons at the Manor vault none of them visited the spot. Then it began to be noised about that the old place had been purchased from the Warriners, and people went so far as to surmise that the new proprietor could be no other than John Jeremiah Doyle, a millionaire stocking manufacturer ambitious of intrenching himself among the old families of New York, who had recently become engaged to Miss Emily Warriner.

Authorities were even found competent to describe the sumptuous mansion of white marble that would soon be built to replace the old Manor-house. Then public interest was claimed by the announcement of Miss Bessie Warriner's engagement to Captain Laurence Hope, now returned to civil life and—some-what reluctantly—resuming his former practice of the law.

The official declaration of Mr. Doyle's agents that he had *not* purchased the Warriner estate, but would build at Newport, put an end to speculation on this point, and people declared that it was all a mistake, and the Manor had not been sold at all.

Laurence Hope's future bride could have told a different story. The Manor *had* been sold, but the purchaser was old Job Adamson, and he had bought it as a wedding-present for Jack Warriner's youngest sister. When Mrs. Warriner found out who had become the owner of her husband's ancestral acres, and for what purpose, she went to call upon Mr. Adamson in his home, and protested against his generosity.

"I believe you remember, ma'am," he said in an-

swer, "that your son gave his life in the effort to save his friend, who is my son. And, if it wa'n't for that, I'd consider that every man who charged up that slope at San Juan had earned the best we stay-at-homes could give him. I mean to put the place in proper repair before the young folks get into it; and it 'll be likely some time before they 'll cale'late to live there, summers. But it 's right it should be owned by a Hope, if not a Warriner —"

"That last can never be!" cried the forlorn mother, bursting into tears. "There 'll be no more Warriners!"

"You were the mother of a hero, ma'am; let that comfort you," said old Job, solemnly. "And you may just make yourself easy about any little thing I do for you and the Hopes. My boy, who, since he's been getting back his strength, stays around the house a good bit, has traced out our family story. And he says it 's heredity that 's driven us—we can't get out of it—we 're just *bound* to be friends. But there 's one way you could favor *me*, ma'am, if you 've a mind to.

"I don't know what ails Rex, but he mopes consid'able. If Mis' Adamson were living, she 'd likely know what to do with him. My notion is, he 's wantin' to get to stay by that little Luey Hope, and I don't blame him. I don't blame him worth a cent. There ain't a girl I ever saw I 'd rather have for him. But he thinks he has n't got a show, maybe. 'T would be a mighty obligation to me if you could find out what the facts in the case are, Mis' Warriner—and let me know—seeing Mis' Adamson 's not—"

The old man gulped, stopped speaking, and got up to pace back and forth in the great library, that, like the rest of his house, was lonely and chill in its magnificence.

A light broke upon Letitia Warriner's comprehension. She recalled what Bessie had told her about Rex thinking Lucy was set apart and devoted to Jack's memory, and, jealous mother though she was, she could not suffer that.

"Oh, Mr. Adamson, I think I can help. Will you let me speak to your son—will he think it a great impertinence if I—?"

"I think not, ma'am," interrupted old Job, eagerly. "I don't know for certain, but I believe you 'd be welcome as flowers in May."

MRS. WARRINER had her talk with Rex, and that selfsame afternoon, when Lucy was sitting by a little fire in the middle drawing-room of her home, Rex Adamson was announced. She trembled a good deal, for during the morning Mrs. Arrowtip had been with *her*.

The eloquence of that animated lady had almost persuaded Lucy that she was pushing her reticence with Rex "absurdly far." Mrs. Arrowtip had previously told Rex the same thing with regard to his attitude of keeping away from Lucy. But then, Mrs. Arrowtip was not Jack Warriner's mother and could not speak at first hand upon the point of how much or how little Lucy owed to Jack's memory. Nor could she convince Rex, as Mrs. Warriner did, that Lucy's

girlish fancy for Jack had never had proper food to feed on, and so had withered in the bud.

"Must I answer?" asked Lucy, at the end of a long argument between the two.

"I really think so," said Rex, looking alternately at her and at the "Lady of the Duel" on the wall, wondering, as he did so, if ever man had such an enchanting pair to stir his blood and set his pulses racing and keep him in cruel uncertainty the while.

"Well, then, if it's only to fulfil the behest of ancestry—don't you remember what we agreed on at Camp Black?"

"'Betwixt mine and thine,'" repeated Rex, dreamily. "How strangely things are coming to us out of the past! I'm afraid to believe what I want to. You mean that you—?"

THEN the joy and glory of the present broke over him, and he cared not for past or future, for anything, but that he had found the clue to life which had so long eluded him.

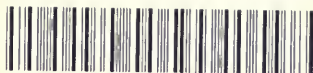
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